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VIEWS

OF

CHRISTIAN NURTURE,

AND OF

SUBJECTS ADJACENT THERETO.

BY

HORACE BUSHNELL.

SECOND EDITION.

HARTFORD:

EDWIN HUNT, No. 6 ASYLUM STREET.

NEW YORK: M. H. NEWMAN & CO.—BOSTON: CROCKER & BREWSTER.

MDCCCXLVIII.

BV 1475
B88

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1847, by

EDWIN HUNT,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Connecticut.

FOUNDRY OF
S. ANDRUS AND SON,
HARTFORD.

PRESS OF
CASE, TIFFANY AND CO.
HARTFORD.

PREFACE.

attention of the public mind is now earnestly fixed on the
bject of Christian Nurture, it seems to be a matter of conse-
if not of justice, that those who are anxious to know the
f the question in debate, should have the means at their
d. It was fortunately made a condition, when I gave up the
ipt of my 'Discourses' to the Massachusetts Sabbath-School
that I should have the right to publish them myself, "with
hges." Encountering, as I do every day, the complaint that
not be had, I have at length concluded, after waiting a proper
their emancipation, that it is my duty, both to the public and
hem as my children, to give them their liberty. There are
ry important questions connected with this subject, which,
ave been scarcely touched in our discussion, and I would
ve undertaken a new and complete work, covering the whole
if I had time and strength for such a labor. Perhaps some
10 is more competent, will assume the task. There are some
es, however, in having the discussion—which is already a
f history, and, in that shape, has its interest—preserve its
l form. I republish therefore the 'Discourses' and the 'Ar-
' in company with three or four other articles, which have a
elation to the view maintained, and will therefore assist the
) come at a more thorough understanding of my general

The associated reasons, too, which give a truth its com-
are often necessary to a full and hearty conviction of its

Of course, it will sometimes occur, in such a collection,
ought is repeated.

ticle on the 'Spiritual Economy of Revivals,' was designed
) remove that dismal state of despair and lethargy consequent

on the presumption, practically held, that there can be nothin
no real piety, save what appears in the shape of a revival-
which is the most disheartening impediment to the Christian
that can be conceived. It will not be supposed, of course, tha
any more implicit admiration of the revival system than I h
years ago, when the article was written.

The article, 'Growth, not Conquest, the True Method of C
Progress,' originally appeared under a different title, whi
matter of taste, I have preferred to change. It was the head o
tian training, in this article, which led to the preparatio
'Discourses,' and thus to the present discussion.

I have added a Sermon, that was written three or four yea
on the 'Organic Unity of the Family,' only reproducing so
of the argument. This, it is hoped, will render what I have
that subject more intelligible to such as have found diffi
realizing the truth of what I have said in more condensed for

Also, a Sermon written several months since, which I have
'The Scene of the Pentecost and a Christian Parish,' the o
which is to give an external description of the mode or ma
which a Christian church may best advance the cause of
Some persons get their most satisfactory impressions of a
through external descriptions or inventories, and not through
principles.

Not concealing the importance of the question we have
hand, let us handle it earnestly, neither fearing to make the d
nor making it hastily. At the same time, it should be un
and remembered, that the question is one that involves, in
or another, all the most abstruse points in theology; one, m
that concerns a child, a very peculiar being, whose internal
is the darker, that it does not lie within the scope of adult co
ness and experience. Therefore my readers will need to ha
patience with themselves, and it will not be wrong if they
some degree of patience to me.

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CHRISTIAN NURTURE.

DISCOURSE I.

"BRING THEM UP IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD."

Ephesians vi. 4.

THERE is then some kind of nurture which is of the Lord, deriving a quality and a power from Him, and communicating the same. Being instituted by Him, it will of necessity have a method and a character peculiar to itself, or rather to Him. It will be the Lord's way of education, having aims appropriate to Him, and, if realized in its full intent, terminating in results impossible to be reached by any merely human method.

What then is the true idea of Christian or divine nurture, as distinguished from that which is not Christian? What is its aim? What its method of working? What its powers and instruments? What its contemplated results? Few questions have greater moment; and it is one of the pleasant signs of the times, that the subject involved is beginning to attract new interest, and excite a spirit of inquiry which heretofore has not prevailed in our churches.

In ordinary cases, the better and more instructive way of handling this subject, would be to go directly into the practical methods of parental discipline, and show by what modes of government and instruction we may hope to realize the best results. But unhappily the public mind is pre-occupied extensively by a view of the whole subject, which I must regard as a theoretical mistake, and one which must involve,

as long as it continues, practical results systematically
rious. This mistaken view it is necessary, if possibl
remove. And accordingly what I have to say will
the form of an argument on the question thus put in is
though I design to gather round the subject, as I proc
as much of practical instruction as the mode of the a
ment will suffer. Assuming then the question above st
What is the true idea of Christian education?—I an
in the following proposition, which it will be the aim o
argument to establish, viz:

THAT THE CHILD IS TO GROW UP A CHRISTIAN. In c
words, the aim, effort, and expectation should be, not,
commonly assumed, that the child is to grow up in si
be converted after he comes to a mature age; but tha
is to open on the world as one that is spiritually rene
not remembering the time when he went through a techr
experience, but seeming rather to have loved what is
from his earliest years. I do not affirm that every c
may, in fact and without exception, be so trained tha
certainly will grow up a Christian. The qualificatio
may be necessary to add will be given in another pl
where they can be stated more intelligibly.

This doctrine is not a novelty, now rashly and for the
time propounded, as some of you may be tempted to supp
I shall show you, before I have done with the argument,
it is as old as the Christian church, and prevails extensi
at the present day in other parts of the world. Neithe
your own experience raise a prejudice against it. If
have endeavored to realize the very truth I here affirm,
find that your children do not exhibit the character you h
looked for; if they seem to be intractable to religious in
ences, and sometimes to display an apparent aversion to
very subject of religion itself, you are not of course to c
clude that the doctrine I here maintain is untrue or imp

ticable. You may be unreasonable in your expectations of your children.

Possibly, there may be seeds of holy principle in them, which you do not discover. A child acts out his present feelings, the feelings of the moment, without qualification or disguise. And how, many times, would all you appear, if you were to do the same? Will you expect of them to be better, and more constant and consistent, than yourselves; or will you rather expect them to be children, human children still, living a mixed life, trying out the good and evil of the world, and preparing, as older Christians do, when they have taken a lesson of sorrow and emptiness, to turn again to the true good?

Perhaps they will go through a rough mental struggle, at some future day, and seem, to others and to themselves, there to have entered on a Christian life. And yet it may be true that there was still some root of right principle established in their childhood, which is here only quickened and developed, as when Christians of a mature age are revived in their piety, after a period of spiritual lethargy; for it is conceivable that regenerate character may exist, long before it is fully and formally developed.

But suppose there is really no trace or seed of holy principle in your children, has there been no fault of piety and constancy in your church? no want of Christian sensibility and love to God? no carnal spirit visible to them and to all, and imparting its noxious and poisonous quality to the Christian atmosphere in which they have had their nurture? For it is not for you alone to realize all that is included in the idea of Christian education. It belongs to the church of God, according to the degree of its social power over you and in you and around your children, to bear a part of the responsibility with you.

Then, again, have you nothing to blame in yourselves? no lack of faithfulness? no indiscretion of manner or of

temper? no mistake of duty, which, with a better and cultivated piety, you would have been able to avoid? you been so nearly even with your privilege and duty you can find no relief but to lay some charge upon G comfort yourselves in the conviction that he has appc the failure you deplore? When God marks out a pl education, or sets up an aim to direct its efforts, you see, at once, that he could not base it on a want of pie you, or on any imperfections that flow from a want of p It must be a plan measured by Himself and the fullne his own gracious intentions.

Besides, you must not assume that we, in this age, ar best Christians that have ever lived, or most likely to duce all the fruits of piety. An assumption so ples to our vanity is more easily made than verified, but va is the weakest as it is the cheapest of all arguments. have some good points, in which we compare favor with other Christians, and Christians of other times, our style of piety is sadly deficient, in many respects, that to such a degree that we have little cause for self-c gratulation. With all our activity and boldness of m ment, there is a certain hardness and rudeness, a want sensibility to things that do not lie in action, which can be too much deplored, or too soon rectified. We hol piety of conquest rather than of love. A kind of pu piety, that is strenuous and fiery on great occasions, wants the beauty of holiness, wants constancy, singlen of aim, loveliness, purity, richness, blamelessness, and— I may add another term not so immediately religious, one that carries, by association, a thousand religious qu ties—wants domesticity of character; wants them, I me not as compared with the perfect standard of Christ, but compared with other examples of piety that have be given in former times, and others that are given now.

For some reason, we do not make a Christian atmosphe

about us—do not produce the conviction that we are living unto God. There is a marvelous want of savor in our piety. It is a flower of autumn, colored as highly as it need be to the eye, but destitute of fragrance. It is too much to hope that, with such an instrument, we can fulfill the true idea of Christian education. Any such hope were even presumptuous. At the same time, there is no so ready way of removing the deficiencies just described, as to recall our churches to their duties in domestic life; those humble, daily, hourly duties, where the spirit we breathe shall be a perpetual element of power and love, bathing the life of childhood.

Thus much it was necessary to say, for the removal of prejudices, that are likely to rise up in your minds, and make you inaccessible to the arguments I may offer. Let all such prejudices be removed, or, if this be too much, let them, at least, be suspended till you have heard what I have to advance; for it cannot be desired of you to believe any thing more than what is shown you by adequate proofs. Which also it is right to ask, that you will hear, if offered, in a spirit of mind, such as becomes our wretched and low attainments, and with a willingness to let God be exalted, though at the expense of some abasement in ourselves. In pursuing the argument, I shall—

I. Collect some considerations which occur to us, viewing the subject on the human side, and then—

II. Show how far and by what methods God has justified, on his part, the doctrine we maintain.

There is then, as the subject appears to us—

1. No absurdity in supposing that children are to grow up in Christ. On the other hand, if there is no absurdity, there is a very clear moral incongruity in setting up a contrary supposition, to be the aim of a system of Christian education. There could not be a worse or more baleful implication given to a child, than that he is to reject God

and all holy principle, till he has come to a mature age. What authority have you from the Scriptures to tell your child, or, by any sign, to show him that you do not expect him truly to love and obey God, till after he has spent whole years in hatred and wrong? What authority to make him feel that he is the most unprivileged of all human beings, capable of sin, but incapable of repentance; old enough to resist all good, but too young to receive any good whatever? It is reasonable to suppose that you have some express authority for a lesson so manifestly cruel and hurtful, else you would shudder to give it. I ask you for the chapter and verse, out of which it is derived. Meantime, wherein would it be less incongruous for you to teach your child that he is to lie and steal, and go the whole round of the vices, and then, after he comes to mature age, reform his conduct by the rules of virtue? Perhaps you do not give your child to expect that he is to grow up in sin; you only expect that he will yourself. That is scarcely better: for that which is your expectation, will assuredly be his; and what is more, any attempt to maintain a discipline at war with your own secret expectations, will only make a hollow and worthless figment of that which should be an open, earnest reality. You will never practically aim at what you practically despair of, and if you do not practically aim to unite your child to God, you will aim at something less, that is, something unchristian, wrong, sinful.

But my child is a sinner, you will say; and how can I expect him to begin a right life, until God gives him a new heart? This is the common way of speaking, and I state the objection in its own phraseology, that it may recognize itself. Who then has told you that a child cannot have the new heart of which you speak? Whence do you learn that if you live the life of Christ, before him and with him, the law of the Spirit of Life may not be such as to include and quicken him also? And why should it be thought

incredible that there should be some really good principle awakened in the mind of a child? For this is all that is implied in a Christian state. The Christian is one who has simply *begun* to love what is good for its own sake, and why should it be thought impossible for a child to have this love begotten in him? Take any scheme of depravity you please, there is yet nothing in it to forbid the possibility that a child should be led, in his first moral act, to cleave unto what is good and right, any more than in the first of his twentieth year. He is, in that case, only a child converted to good, leading a mixed life as all Christians do. The good in him goes into combat with the evil, and holds a qualified sovereignty. And why may not this internal conflict of goodness cover the whole life from its dawn, as well as any part of it? And what more appropriate to the doctrine of spiritual influence itself, than to believe that as the Spirit of Jehovah fills all the worlds of matter, and holds a presence of power and government in all objects, so all human souls, the infantile as well as the adult, have a nurture of the Spirit appropriate to their age and their wants? What opinion is more essentially monstrous, in fact, than that which regards the Holy Spirit as having no agency in the immature souls of children, who are growing up, helpless and unconscious, into the perils of time?

2. It is to be expected that Christian education will radically differ from that which is not Christian. Now, it is the very character and mark of all unchristian education, that it brings up the child for future conversion. No effort is made, save to form a habit of outward virtue, and, if God please to convert the family to something higher and better, after they come to the age of maturity, it is well. Is then Christian education, or the nurture of the Lord, no way different from this? Or is it rather to be supposed that it will have a higher aim and a more sacred character?

And, since *it is the* distinction of Christian parents, that

they are themselves in the nurture of the Lord, since and the Divine Love, communicated through him, come the food of their life, what will they so na seek as to have their children partakers with them together with them in the grace of life? I am well of the common impression that Christian education i ciently distinguished by the endeavor of Christian to teach their children the lessons of Scripture histo the doctrines or dogmas of Scripture theology. But are given to understand, at the same time, that the sons can be expected to produce no fruit till they ar to a mature age—that they are to grow up still in th character as other children do, who have no such i tion—what is this but to enforce the practical rejectio the lessons taught them? And which, in truth, is for them, to grow up sin in under Scripture light, heart hardened by so many religious lessons; or to up in sin, unvexed and unannoyed by the wearisom of lectures that only discourage all practical be Which is better, to be piously brought up to sin, or allowed quietly to vegetate in it?

These are questions that I know not how to decide the doubt in which they leave us will at least suff show that Christian education has, in this view, no eminent advantages over that which is unchristian, raise any broad and dignified distinction between We certainly know that much of what is called Chr nurture, only serves to make the subject of religion o and that, as nearly as we can discover, in exact prop to the amount of religious teaching received. A small share of the difficulty to be overcome afterwar the struggle of conversion, is created in just this way

On the other hand, you will hear, for example, of like the following: A young man, correctly but not *giously* brought up, light and gay in his manners,

thoughtless hitherto in regard to any thing of a serious nature, happens accidentally one Sunday, while his friends are gone to ride, to take down a book on the evidences of Christianity. His eye, floating over one of the pages, becomes fixed, and he is surprised to find his feelings flowing out strangely into its holy truths. He is conscious of no struggle of hostility, but a new joy dawns in his being. Henceforth, to the end of a long and useful life, he is a Christian man. The love into which he was surprised continues to flow, and he is remarkable, in the churches, all his life long, as one of the most beautiful, healthful, and dignified examples of Christian piety. Now, a very little mis-education, called Christian, discouraging the piety it teaches, and making enmity itself a necessary ingredient in the struggle of conversion, conversion no reality without a struggle, might have sufficed to close the mind of this man against every thought of religion to the end of life.

Such facts (for the case above given is a fact and not a fancy) compel us to suspect the value of much that is called Christian education. They suggest the possibility also that Christian piety should begin in other and milder forms of exercise, than those which commonly distinguish the conversion of adults; that Christ himself, by that renewing Spirit who can sanctify from the womb, should be practically infused into the childish mind; in other words, that the house, having a domestic Spirit of grace dwelling in it, should become the church of childhood, the table and hearth a holy rite, and life an element of saving power. Something is wanted that is better than teaching, something that transcends mere effort and will-work—the loveliness of a good life, the repose of faith, the confidence of righteous expectation, the sacred and cheerful liberty of the Spirit—all glowing about the young soul, as a warm and genial nurture, and forming in it, by methods that are silent and imperceptible, a spirit of duty and

religious obedience to God. This only is Christian nurture, the nurture of the Lord.

3. It is a fact that all Christian parents would like to see their children grow up in piety; and the better Christians they are, the more earnestly they desire it; and, the more lovely and constant the Christian spirit they manifest, the more likely it is, in general, that their children will early display the Christian character. This is current opinion. But why should a Christian parent, the deeper his piety and the more closely he is drawn to God, be led to desire, the more earnestly, what, in God's view, is even absurd or impossible. And, if it be generally seen that the children of such are more likely to become Christians early, what forbids the hope that, if they were better Christians still, living a more single and Christ-like life, and more cultivated in their views of family nurture, they might not see their children grow up in piety towards God? Or, if they may not always see it as clearly as they desire, might they not still be able to implant some holy principle, which shall be the seed of a Christian character in their children, though not developed fully and visibly till a later period in life?

4. Assuming the corruption of human nature, when should we think it wisest to undertake or expect a remedy? When evil is young and pliant to good, or when it is confirmed by years of sinful habit? And when, in fact, is the human heart found to be so ductile to the motives of religion, as in the simple, ingenuous age of childhood? How easy is it then, as compared with the stubbornness of adult years, to make all wrong seem odious, all good lovely and desirable. If not discouraged by some ill-temper, which bruises all the gentle sensibilities, or repelled by some technical view of religious character, which puts it beyond his age, how ready is the child to be taken by good, as it were, beforehand, and yield his ductile nature to the truth and Spirit of God, and to a fixed prejudice against all that God forbids.

He cannot understand, of course, in the earliest stage of childhood, the philosophy of religion as a renovated experience, and that is not the form of the first lessons he is to receive. He is not to be told that he must have a new heart and exercise faith in Christ's atonement. We are to understand, that a right spirit may be virtually exercised in children, when, as yet, it is not intellectually received, or as a form of doctrine. Thus, if they are put upon an effort to be good, connecting the fact that God desires it and will help them in the endeavor, that is all which, in a very early age, they can receive, and that includes every thing—repentance, love, duty, dependence, faith. Nay, the operative truth necessary to a new life, may possibly be communicated through and from the parent, being revealed in his looks, manners, and ways of life, before they are of an age to understand the teaching of words; for the Christian scheme, the gospel, is really wrapped up in the life of every Christian parent, and beams out from him as a living epistle, before it escapes from the lips, or is taught in words. And the Spirit of truth may as well make this living truth effectual, as the preaching of the gospel itself.

Never is it too early for good to be communicated. Infancy and childhood are the ages most pliant to good. And who can think it necessary that the plastic nature of childhood must first be hardened into stone, and stiffened into enmity towards God and all duty, before it can become a candidate for Christian character! There could not be a more unnecessary mistake, and it is as unnatural and pernicious, I fear, as it is unnecessary.

There are many who assume the radical goodness of human nature, and the work of Christian education is, in their view, only to educate, or educe the good that is in us. Let no one be disturbed by the suspicion of a coincidence between what I have here said and such a theory. The

natural pravity of man is plainly asserted in the Scriptu
and, if it were not, the familiar laws of physiology w
require us to believe, what amounts to the same th
And if neither Scripture nor physiology taught us the
trine, if the child was born as clear of natural preju
or damage, as Adam before his sin, spiritual educatio
what is the same, probation, that which trains a being
a stable, intelligent virtue hereafter, would still inv
an experiment of evil, therefore a fall and a bondage u
the laws of evil; so that, view the matter as we will, t
is no so unreasonable assumption, none so wide of all
philosophy, as that which proposes to form a child to vi
by simply educing or drawing out what is in him.

The growth of Christian virtue is no vegetable proc
no mere onward development. It involves a stru
with evil, a fall and a rescue. The soul becomes es
lished in holy virtue, as a free exercise, only as it is pa
round the corner of fall and redemption, ascending
unto God through a double experience, in which it le
the bitterness of evil and the worth of good, fighting
way out of one, and achieving the other as a victory.
child, therefore, may as well begin life under a law
hereditary damage, as to plunge himself into evil by
own experiment, which he will as naturally do from
simple impulse of curiosity, or the instinct of knowle
as from any noxious quality in his mold derived by desc
For it is not sin which he derives from his parents; at le
not sin in any sense which imports blame, but only s
prejudice to the perfect harmony of his mold, some l
of pravity or obliquity which inclines him to evil. Th
suggestions are offered, not as necessary to be receive
every particular, but simply to show that the scheme of e
cation proposed, is not to be identified with another, wh
assumes the radical goodness of human nature, and acc
ing to which, if it be true, Christian education is insignifi

5. It is implied in all our religious philosophy, that if a child ever does any thing in a right spirit, ever loves any thing because it is good and right, it involves the dawn of a new life. This we cannot deny or doubt, without bringing in question our whole scheme of doctrine. Is it then incredible that some really good feeling should be called into exercise in a child? In all the discipline of the house, quickened as it should be by the Spirit of God, is it true that he can never once be brought to submit to parental authority lovingly and because it is right? Must we even hold the absurdity of the scripture counsel—"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right"? When we speak thus of a love to what is right and good, we must of course discriminate between the mere excitement of a natural sensibility to pleasure in the contemplation of what is good, (of which the worst minds are more or less capable,) and a practical subordination of the soul to its power, a practical embrace of its law. The child must not only be touched with some gentle emotions towards what is right, but he must love it with a fixed love, love it for the sake of its principle, receive it as a vital and formative power.

Nor is there any age, which offers itself to God's truth and love, and to that Quickening Spirit whence all good proceeds, with so much of ductile feeling and susceptibilities so tender. The child is under parental authority too for the very purpose, it would seem, of having the otherwise abstract principle of all duty impersonated in his parents, and thus brought home to his practical embrace; so that, learning to obey his parents in the Lord, because it is right, he may thus receive, before he can receive it intellectually, the principle of all piety and holy obedience. And when he is brought to exercise a spirit of true and loving submission to the good law of his parents, what will you see, many times, but a look of childish joy, and a happy sweet-

ness or manner, and a ready delight in authority, as lil all the demonstrations of Christian experience, as any t childish can be to what is mature?

6. Children have been so trained as never to remer the time when they began to be religious. Baxter wa one time, greatly troubled concerning himself, becaus could recollect no time when there was a gracious ch in his character. But he discovered, at length, that "cation is as properly a means of grace as preaching," thus found the sweeter comfort in his love to God, tha learned to love him so early. The European churc generally, regard Christian piety more as a habit of formed under the training of childhood, and less a marked spiritual change in experience. In Germany, example, the church includes all the people, and i remarkable that, under a scheme so loose, and with much of pernicious error taught in the pulpit, there is so much of deep religious feeling, so much of lovely simple character, and a savor of Christian piety so gei ally prevalent in the communitv. So true is this, that German people are every day spoken of as a people r gious by nature; no other way being observed of accou ing for the strong religious bent they manifest. Wher it is due, beyond any reasonable question, to the fact t children are placed under a form of treatment wh expects them to be religious, and are not discouraged the demand of an experience above their years.

Again, the Moravian Brethren, it is agreed by all, g as ripe and graceful an exhibition of piety, as any body Christians living on the earth, and it is the radical d tinction of their system that it rests its power on Christ education. They make their churches schools of h nurture to childhood, and expect their children to grow there, as plants in the house of the Lord. Accordingly *is affirmed* that not one in ten of the members of t

church, recollects any time when he began to be religious. Is it then incredible that what has been can be? Would it not be wiser and more modest, when facts are against us, to admit that there is certainly some bad error, either in our life, or in our doctrine, or in both, which it becomes us to amend?

Once more, if we narrowly examine the relation of parent and child, we shall not fail to discover something like a law of organic connection, as regards character, subsisting between them. Such a connection as makes it easy to believe, and natural to expect that the faith of the one will be propagated in the other. Perhaps I should rather say, such a connection as induces the conviction that the character of one is actually included in that of the other, as a seed is formed in the capsule; and being there matured, by a nutriment derived from the stem, is gradually separated from it. It is a singular fact, that many believe substantially the same thing, in regard to evil character, but have no thought of any such possibility in regard to good. There has been much speculation, of late, as to whether a child is born in depravity, or whether the depraved character is superinduced afterwards. But, like many other great questions, it determines much less than is commonly supposed; for, according to the most proper view of the subject, a child is really not born till he emerges from the infantile state, and never before that time can he be said to receive a separate and properly individual nature.

The declaration of Scripture, and the laws of physiology, I have already intimated, compel the belief that a child's nature is somehow depravated by descent from parents, who are under the corrupting effects of sin. But this, taken as a question relating to the mere *punctum temporis*, or precise point of birth, is not a question of any so grave import as is generally supposed; for the child, after birth, is still within the matrix of the parental life, and will be, more or

less, for many years. And the parental life will be flo into him all that time, just as naturally, and by a l truly organic, as when the sap of the trunk flows i limb. We must not govern our thoughts, in such a m by our eyes; and because the physical separation taken place, conclude that no organic relation rem Even the physical being of the child is dependent sti nutrition on organic processes not in itself. Meantim mental being and character have scarcely begun to h proper individual life. Will, in connection with consci is the basis of personality, or individuality, and these as yet only in their rudimental type, as when the for a seed is beginning to be unfolded at the root of a flo

At first, the child is held as a mere passive lump i arms, and he opens into conscious life under the soul c parent, streaming into his eyes and ears, through the ners and tones of the nursery. The kind and degr passivity are gradually changed as life advances. A farther on it is observed that a smile wakens a smile: kind of sentiment or passion, playing in the face o parent, wakens a responsive sentiment or passion. I tion irritates, a frown withers, love expands a look genial to itself, and why not holy love? Next the e opened to the understanding of words, but what word child shall hear, he cannot choose, and has as little cap to select the sentiments that are poured into his soul. ther on, the parents begin to govern him by appeals to expressed in commands, and whatever their require may be, he can as little withstand it, as the violet can the scorching sun, or the tattered leaf can tame the h cane. Next they appoint his school, choose his b regulate his company, decide what form of religion, what religious opinions he shall be taught, by taking to a church of their own selection. In all this, *infringe upon* no right of the child, they only fulfi

office which belongs to them. Their will and character are designed to be the matrix of the child's will and character. Meantime, he approaches more and more closely, and by a gradual process, to the proper rank and responsibility of an individual creature, during all which process of separation, he is having their exercises and ways translated into him. Then, at last, he comes forth to act his part in such color of evil, and why not of good, as he has derived from them.

The tendency of all our modern speculations is to an extreme individualism, and we carry our doctrines of free will so far as to make little or nothing of organic laws; not observing that character may be, to a great extent, only the free development of exercises previously wrought in us, or extended to us, when other wills had us within their sphere. All the Baptist theories of religion are based in this error. They assume, as a first truth, that no such thing is possible as an organic connection of character, an assumption which is plainly refuted by what we see with our eyes, and, as I shall by and by show, by the declarations of Scripture. We have much to say also, in common with the Baptists, about the beginning of moral agency, and we seem to fancy that there is some definite moment when a child becomes a moral agent, passing out of a condition where he is a moral nullity, and where no moral agency touches his being. Whereas he is rather to be regarded, at the first, as lying within the moral agency of the parent, and passing out, by degrees, through a course of mixed agency, to a proper independency and self-possession. The supposition that he becomes, at some certain moment, a complete moral agent, which a moment before he was not, is clumsy, and has no agreement with observation. The separation is gradual. He is never, at any moment after birth, to be regarded as perfectly beyond the sphere of good and bad exercises; for the parent exercises himself in the

child, playing his emotions and sentiments, and work character in him, by virtue of an organic power.

And this is the very idea of Christian education, t begins with nurture or cultivation. And the intent that the Christian life and spirit of the parents shal into the mind of the child, to blend with his incipien half-formed exercises; that they shall thus beget thei good within him—their thoughts, opinions, faith, and which are to become a little more, and yet a little his own separate exercise, but still the same in char The contrary assumption, that virtue must be the p of separate and absolutely independent choice, is assumption. As regards the measure of personal and demerit, it is doubtless true that every subject of is to be responsible only for what is his own. But still is rather a *state* of being than an act or series of and, if we look at the causes which induce or prepare a state, the will of the person himself may have a among these causes more or less important, and it wor absurdity to suppose that one may be even prepar such a state, by causes prior to his own will; so that, he sets off to act for himself, his struggle and duty m rather to sustain and perfect the state begun, than t duce a new one. Certain it is that we are never, a age, so independent as to be wholly out of the rea organic laws which affect our character.

All society is organic—the church, the state, the sc the family; and there is a spirit in each of these organ peculiar to itself, and more or less hostile, more or favorable to religious character, and to some extent, at sovereign over the individual man. A very great sha the power in what is called a revival of religion, is or power; nor is it any the less divine on that account. child is only more within the power of organic laws *we all are.* We possess only a mixed individuality al

life long. A pure, separate, individual man, living *wholly* within, and from himself, is a mere fiction. No such person ever existed, or ever can. I need not say that this view of an organic connection of character subsisting between parent and child, lays a basis for notions of Christian education, far different from those which now prevail, under the cover of a merely fictitious and mischievous individualism.

Perhaps it may be necessary to add, that, in the strong language I have used concerning the organic connection of character between the parent and the child, it is not designed to assert a power in the parent to renew the child, or that the child can be renewed by any agency of the Spirit less immediate, than that which renews the parent himself. When a germ is formed on the stem of any plant, the formative instinct of the plant may be said in one view to produce it; but the same solar heat which quickens the plant, must quicken also the germ, and sustain the internal action of growth, by a common presence in both. So, if there be an organic power of character in the parent, such as that of which I have spoken, it is not a complete power in itself, but only such a power as demands the realizing presence of the Spirit of God, both in the parent and the child, to give it effect. As Paul said, "I have begotten you through the gospel," so may we say of the parent, who, having a living gospel enveloped in his life, brings it into organic connection with the soul of childhood. But the declaration excludes the necessity of a divine influence, not more in one case than in the other.

Such are some of the considerations that offer themselves, viewing our subject on the human side, or as it appears in the light of human evidence—all concurring to produce the conviction, that it is the only true idea of Christian education, that the child is to grow up in the life of the parent, and be a Christian, in principle, from his earliest years.

DISCOURSE II.

"BRING THEM UP IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE

Ephesians vi.

WE proceed now to inquire—

II. How far God, in the revelation made of his cha and will, favors the view of Christian nurture vind in a former discourse, by arguments and evidences inferior nature? And—

1. According to all that God has taught us conc his own dispositions, he desires, on his part, that ch should grow up in piety, as earnestly as the pare desire it; nay, as much more earnestly, as he ha more intensely, and desires good with less mixture of ification. Goodness, or the production of goodness, supreme end of God, and therefore, we know, on firs ciples, that he desires to bestow whatsoever spiritual is necessary to the moral renovation of childhood, and it, unless some collateral reasons in his plan, involvi extension of holy virtue, require him to withhold.

Thus, if nothing were hung upon parental faithf and example, if the child were not used, in some deg way, as an argument, to hold the parent to a life of tian diligence, then the good principle in the parent lack the necessary stimulus to bring it to maturity. if all children alike, in spite of the evil and unch example of their parents, were to be started into spiritually renewed, then, wanting in their future parents one of the strongest motives to holy living, *fact* that their children also are safe as regards a

beginning, without any carefulness in them, or prayerfulness in their life; their own virtue might so overgrow itself with weeds, as never to attain to a sound maturity. Let it be enough to know, on first principles in the character of God, that he will so dispense his spiritual agency to you and to your children, as to produce, considering the freedom of you both, the best measure and the ripest state of holy virtue. And how far short is this of the conclusion, that if you live as you ought and may yourselves, God will so dispense his spirit that you may see your children grow up in piety?

Observe, too, that he expressly pledges his holy Spirit to you, as one of his first gifts, and, what is more, even commands you to be filled with the Spirit; and considering the organic relation that subsists, by his own appointment, between you and your children, how far off is he, in this, from pledging you a mercy that accrues to their benefit? He appoints you also to be a light to the world, and, by the grace he pours into your being, prepares you to be; how much more a light to minds that are fed by simple nurture from your own? And when you consider how fond he is, if I may so speak, in the blessings he pours on the good, of gathering their children with them in the same circle of favor, how many of his promises, in all ages, run—"to you and to your children," what better assurance can you reasonably ask, to fortify your confidence of whatever spiritual grace may be necessary to your utmost success?

2. If there be any such thing as Christian nurture, distinguished from that which is not Christian, which is generally admitted, and, by the Scriptures clearly asserted, then is it some kind of nurture which God appoints. Does it then accord with the known character of God, to appoint a scheme of education, the only proper result of which shall be that children are trained up under it in sin? It would not be more absurd to suppose that God has appointed

church education, to produce a first crop of sin, and a crop of holiness. God appoints nothing of which sin only sin, is to be the proper and legitimate result, wh for a longer or a shorter time; least of all, a mode of ing which is to produce sin. Holy virtue is the ai every plan God adopts, every means he prescribes, ar have no right to look only for sin, in that which h appointed as a means of virtue. We cannot do it u standingly without great impiety.

3. God does expressly lay it upon us to expect tha children will grow up in piety, under the parental nur and assumes the possibility that such a result may narily be realized. "Train up a child"—how? for fi conversion?—No, "but in the way he should go, that he is old he may not depart from it." If it be said this relates only to outward habits of virtue and vice to spiritual life, the Old Testament, I reply, does not that distinction, as it is raised in the New. It puts all together, all evil together, and regards a child traine in the way he should go, as going in all the ways, and filling all the ideas of virtue. The phraseology of New Testament carries the same import. "Bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," a for expression, which indicates the existence of a Divine ture, that is to encompass the child and mold him unto so that he shall be brought up, as it were, in Him.

4. A time is foretold, as our churches generally bel when all shall know God, even from the least to the g est; that is, shall spiritually know him, or so that t shall be no need of exhorting one another to know l for intellectual knowledge is not carried by exhorta If such a time is ever to come, then, at least, children to grow up in Christ. Can it come too soon? And, if have the opinion that any such thing is impossible, ei *we, or those who* come after us, must get rid of it.

principal reason why the great expectations of the future, that we, in this age, are giving out so confidently, seem only visionary and idle dreams to many, is that we are perpetually assuming their impossibility ourselves. Our very theory of religion is, that men are to grow up in evil, and be dragged into the church of God by conquest. The world is to lie in halves, and the kingdom of God is to stretch itself side by side with the kingdom of darkness, making sallies into it, and taking captive those who are sufficiently hardened and bronzed in guiltiness to be converted!

Thus we assume even the absurdity of all our expectations in regard to the possible advancement of human society and the universal prevalence of Christian virtue. And thus we throw an air of extravagance and unreason over all we do. Whereas there is a sober and rational possibility, that human society should be universally pervaded by Christian virtue. The Christian scheme has a scope of intention, and instruments and powers adequate to this: it descends upon the world to claim all souls for its dominion—all men of all climes, all ages from childhood to the grave. It is, indeed, a plan which supposes the existence of sin, and sin will be in the world, and in all hearts in it, as long as the world or human society continues; but the scheme has a breadth of conception, and has powers and provisions embodied in it, which, apart from all promises and predictions, certify us of a day when it will reign in all human hearts, and all that live shall live in Christ. Let us either renounce any such confidence, or show, by a thorough consistency in our religious doctrines, that we hold it deliberately and manfully.

5. We discover in the Scriptures that the organic law, of which I have spoken, is distinctly recognised, and that character in children is often regarded as, in some very important sense, derivative from their parents. It is thus that "*sin has passed* upon all men." "By the offence of

one, judgment came upon all." Christian faith is spoken of in a similar way—"The unfeigned faith, v dwelt first, in thy grandmother Lois, and thy m Eunice, and, I am persuaded, that in thee also." Not in the bald and naked sense, it had descended thus thr three generations. But the apostle conceives a pow the good life of these mothers, that must needs trai some flavor of piety. In like manner, God is repres as "keeping covenant and mercy with them that love and keep his commandments, to a thousand generat which, if it signifies any thing, amounts to a declar that he will spiritually own and bless every succee generation, to the end of the world, if only the prec will live so as to be fit vehicles of his blessing; for it i any covenant, as a form of mutual contract, which ca the divine favor, but it is the loving Him rather, and k ing His commandments, by an upright, godly life, w sets the parents on terms of friendship with God, secures the inhabitation of His power.

Declarations like those in the eighteenth chapter of kiel, "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father "the soul that sinneth, it shall die,"—are hastily applie many, not to show that the child is to be punished only his own sin, which is their true import, but, as if it the same thing, to disprove the fact of an organic con tion, by which children receive a character from t parents. Whereas this latter is a truth which we see our eyes, and one that is constantly affirmed in the Sc tures, both in respect to bad character and to good. "I layeth up the iniquity of the wicked for his children, "Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the childre the third and fourth generation." By which we ar understand, what is every day exhibited in actual hist proof, that the wickedness of parents propagates itsel *the character* and condition of their children, and th

ordinarily requires three or four generations to ripen the sad harvest of misery and debasement. Again, on the other side, "he hath blessed thy children with thee,"— "For the good of them and their children after them,"— "For the promise is to you and to your children." The Scriptures have a perpetual habit, if I may so speak, of associating children with the character and destiny of their parents. In this respect, they maintain a marked contrast with the extreme individualism of our modern philosophy. They do not always regard the individual as an isolated unit, but they often look upon men as they exist, in families and races, and under organic laws.

Something has undoubtedly been gained to modern theology, as a human science, by fixing the attention strongly upon the individual man, as a moral agent, immediately related to God, and responsible only for his own actions; at the same time there was a truth, an important truth, underlying the old doctrine of federal headship and original or imputed sin, though strangely misconceived, which we seem, in our one-sided speculations, to have quite lost sight of. And how can we ever attain to any right conception of organic duties, until we discover the reality of organic powers and relations? And how can we hope to set ourselves in harmony with the scriptures, in regard to family nurture, or household baptism, or any other kindred subject, while our theories include, or overlook precisely that which is the base of their teachings and appointments? This brings me to my—

Last argument, which is drawn from infant or household baptism—a rite which supposes the fact of an organic connection of character between the parent and the child; a seal of faith in the parent, applied over to the child, on the ground of a presumption that his faith is wrapped up in the parent's faith; so that he is accounted a believer *from the beginning*. We must distinguish here between a

fact and a presumption of fact. If you look upon a
of wheat, it contains, in itself, presumptively, a tho
generations of wheat, though by reason of some fault
cultivation, or some speck of diseased matter in its
may, in fact, never reproduce at all. So the Chr
parent has, in his character, a germ, which has p
presumptively, to produce its like in his children, th
by reason of some bad fault in itself, or possibly som
ward hindrance in the Church, or some providen
death, it may fail to do so. Thus it is that infant ba
becomes an appropriate rite. It sees the child in the p
counts him presumptively a believer and a Christian,
with the parent, baptizes him also. Furthermore, yo
perceive that it must be presumed, either that the chil
grow up a believer, or that he will not. The Baptis
sumes that he will not, and therefore declares the rite
inappropriate. God presumes that he will, and ther
appoints it. The Baptist tells the child that nothin
sin can be expected of him; God tells him that fo
parents' sakes, whose faith he is to follow, he has w
his own name upon him, and expects him to grow up
duty and piety.

I have no desire to press the passages in which me
is made of household baptism beyond their true im
When Paul is said to have "baptized the household of
phanas," our Baptist friends reply that the text proves
ing, in respect to infant baptism, because it cannot be sh
that there were any children in the household; and s
who practice infant baptism, have conceded the suffici
of the objection. But the power of this proof-text doe
depend, in the least, on the fact that there were childr
the household of Stephanas, but simply on the form o
language. Indeed, it has always seemed to me tha
argument for infant baptism is rather strengthened
weakened, by the supposition that there were, in fac

infants or children in this household; for a household generally contains children, and a term so inclusive in its import, could never come into use, unless it was the practice for baptism to go by households. Under a practice like that of our Baptist brethren, what preacher would ever be heard to speak in this general inclusive way, of having baptized a household? In the case of the jailor, too, the same reasoning holds. Here, however, our Baptist brethren go farther, endeavoring to show positively, from the language used, that there were no infants or children in the household; for when it is said that the jailor "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house," it is argued that, inasmuch as infant children are incapable of believing, there could have been no infants in the family. Admitting the correctness of the translation, which some have questioned, the argument seems rather plausible as a turn of logic, than just and convincing; for, if we consider the more decisive position held in that age by the heads of families, and how, in common speech, they were supposed to carry the religion of the family with them, we shall be convinced that nothing was more natural than the very language here used. It was taken for granted, as a matter of common understanding, that, in a change of religion, the children went with the parents: if they became Jews, that their children would be Jews; if Christian believers, that their children would be Christians. Hence all the terms used, in reference to their religion, took the most inclusive form. If one believed in God, he believed with all his house: the change he suffered, in the common understanding of the age, carried the house with him; and it occurred to no one to question the literal exactness of such like inclusive terms.

It has been a fashion, with many modern critics, to surrender both these passages as proofs of infant baptism, and they certainly do not prove it, in just the way in which

many have used them as proof-texts. But if any or
seek a point of view, whence he may be able to
natural and easy interpretation to the language used
he will ask, on the simple doctrine of chances, what
there was that these two households should include
dren, and moreover what chance that, in the only two
of household baptism mentioned in the Scripture, the
holds should have been distinguished by this singu
he will be as little likely as possible, to concede t
that infant baptism is not adequately proved by
passages.

But the true idea of these passages, and also of t
itself, is seen most evidently in the history of its est
ment by Christ, in the third chapter of John. The J
nation regarded other nations as unclean. Hence,
a Gentile family wished to become Jewish citizens,
were baptized in token of cleansing. Then they
said to be re-born, or regenerated, so as to be acc
true descendants of Abraham. We use the term
uralize, that is, to *make natural born*, in the same
But Christ had come to set up a spiritual kingdo
kingdom of heaven; and finding all men aliens, an
itually unclean, he applies over the right of baptism,
was familiar to the Jews, ("art thou a Master in Isra
knowest not these things?") giving it a higher
"Except a man be born of water *and of the Spirit*, h
not enter the kingdom of heaven." But the Gentile
lyte, according to the custom here described—here
point of the argument—came with his family. They
all baptized together, young and old, all regenerat
naturalized together; and therefore in the new appli
made of the rite to signify spiritual cleansing and reg
tion, it is understood, of course, that children are to
with their parents. To have excluded them would
been, to every Jewish mind, the height of absurdity

could not have been excluded, without express exception, and no exception was made.

Some have questioned whether proselyte baptism existed at this early age; but of this, the third chapter of John is itself conclusive proof; for how else was baptism familiarly known to the Jews as connected with regeneration; that is, civil regeneration? There is always an historic reason for religious rites and for usages of language; and you will find it impossible to suppose that Christ appointed baptism, and set the rite in connection with spiritual regeneration, by any mere accident, or without some historic basis, answering to that which I have just described. In this manner, all his language, in the interview with Nicodemus, becomes natural and easy.

It follows that the children of Christian disciples, being baptized with their parents, as the children of Gentile proselytes were baptized with theirs, would be taken or presumed by the church to be spiritually cleansed, in the same manner. Accordingly, just as the children of Jews were accounted Jews, and not as unclean, when one of the parents was a Jew, so Paul tells us, that in the church of God, the believing party sanctifies the unbelieving, "else were your children unclean, but now are they holy;" showing that the Jewish analogies, in regard to children, were in fact translated, or passed over to the church, and adopted there—a translation that naturally followed, from the re-application of proselyte baptism.

Then passing into the early history of the church, we hear Justin Martyr saying: "There are some of us, eighty years old, who were made disciples to Christ in their childhood;" that is, in the age of the apostles, and while they were yet living; for it was now less than eighty years since their death. And in the expression "*made disciples*," taken in connection with the baptismal formula, "Go disciple all nations, baptizing," &c., we see that he alludes to

baptism; for baptism was the rite that introduced the sul into the Christian school as a disciple; and what so natur that the children of disciples should be disciples with th

Then again, Ireneus, who lived within one generatio the apostles, gives us the second mention of this rite w appears in history, when he says: "Christ came to sav persons through himself; all, I say, who through him regenerated unto God: infants and little ones, and chil and youth, and the aged." Which phrase, "*regener unto God*," applied to parents and little ones, allude baptism: showing that a notion of baptism, as conne with regeneration, coincident with that which we foun the third chapter of John, was then current in the chu

I have been thus full upon the rite of baptism, because that is my subject, but because the rite invol in all its grounds and reasons, the same view of Chris education which I am seeking to establish. One ca be thoroughly understood and received without the ot And it is precisely on this account that we have so g difficulty in sustaining the rite of infant baptism. It ou to be difficult to sustain any rite, after the sense of i wholly gone from us. You perceive, too, in this exposit that the view of Christian nurture I am endeavoring vindicate, is not new, but is older, by far, than the one r prevalent—as old as the Christian church. It is radica one with the ancient doctrine of baptism and regenerati advanced by Christ, and accepted by the first fathers.

We have much to say of baptismal regeneration a great error, which undoubtedly it is, in the form in wh it is held; but it is only a less hurtful error than some us hold in denying it. The distinction between our d trine of baptismal regeneration, and the ancient Script view, is too broad and palpable to be mistaken. Accordi to the modern church dogma, no faith, in the parents *necessary* to the effect of the rite. Sponsors too are brou

in between all parents and their duty, to assume the very office which belongs only to them. And, what is worse, the child is said to be actually regenerated by the act of the priest. According to the more ancient view, or that of the scriptures, nothing depends upon the priest or minister, save that he execute the rite in due form. The regeneration is not actual, but only presumptive, and every thing depends upon the organic law of character pertaining between the parent and the child, the church and the child, thus upon duty and holy living and gracious example. The child is too young to choose the rite for himself, but the parent, having him as it were in his own life, is allowed the confidence that his own faith and character will be reproduced in the child, and grow up in his growth, and that thus the propriety of the rite as a seal of faith will not be violated. In giving us this rite, on the grounds stated, God promises, in fact, on his part, to dispense that spiritual grace which is necessary to the fulfillment of its import. In this way too is it seen that the Christian economy has a place for persons of all ages; for it would be singular if, after all we say of the universality of God's mercy as a gift to the human race, it could yet not limber itself to man, so as to adapt a place for the age of childhood, but must leave a full fourth part of the race, the part least hardened in evil and tenderest to good, unrecognised and unprovided for—gathering a flock without lambs, or, I should rather say, gathering a flock away from the lambs. Such is not the spirit of Him who said, "forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Therefore we bring them into the school of Christ and the pale of his mercy with us, there to be trained up in the holy nurture of the Lord. And then the result is to be tested afterwards, or at an advanced period of life, by trying their character in the same way as the character of all Christians is tried; *for many* are baptized in adult age, who truly

do not believe, as is afterwards discovered. And yet Baptist brethren never re-baptize them, notwithstandin they say of faith as the necessary condition of baptis

But there are two objections to this view of Christian ture, which may occur to some of you, and may even su to break the force of my argument, if they are not remo

1. A theoretical objection, that it leaves no room fo sovereignty of God, in appointing the moral characte men and families. Thus it is declared that "all ar Israel who are of Israel," and that God, before the chil Jacob and Esau had done either good or evil, profe his love to one, and his rejection of the other. But wonder is, in this case of Rebecca and her children, such a mother did not ruin them both. A partial mot scorning one child, teaching the other to lie and trick blind father, and extort from a starving brother his b right honor, cannot be said to furnish a very good tes the power of Christian education. But show me the c where the whole conduct of the parents has been suc it should be to produce the best effects, and where the s reignty of God has appointed the ruin of the child whether all, or any one of them. The sovereignty God has always a relation to means, and we are not aut ized to think of it, in any case, as separated from means.

2. An objection from observation—asking why it i our doctrine be true, that many persons, remarkable their piety, have yet been so unfortunate in their childr Because, I answer, many persons, remarkable for t piety, are yet very disagreeable persons, and that too reason of some very marked defect in their religious c acter. They display just that spirit, and act in just manner, which is likely to make religion odious—the n odious, the more urgently they commend it. Someti they appear well to the world one remove distant f *them, they shine* well in their written biography, but

living in their family will know what others do not; and if their children turn out badly, will never be at a loss for the reason. Many persons, too, have such defective views of the manner of teaching appropriate to early childhood, that they really discourage their children. "Fathers provoke not your children to anger," says one, "lest they be discouraged;" implying that there is such a thing as encouraging, and such a thing as discouraging good principle and piety in a child. And there are other ways of discouraging children besides provoking them to an angry and wounded feeling by harsh treatment.

I once took up a book, from a Sabbath-school library, one problem of which was to teach a child that he wants a new heart. A lovely boy (for it was a narrative) was called every day to resolve that he would do no wrong that day, a task which he undertook most cheerfully, at first, and even with a show of delight. But, before the sun went down, he was sure to fall into some ill-temper or be overtaken by some infirmity. Whereupon, the conclusion was immediately sprung upon him that he wanted a new heart. We are even amazed that any teacher of ordinary intelligence should not once have imagined how she herself, or how the holiest Christian living, would fare under such kind of regimen; how certain to discover every day, and probably some hours before sunset, that she too wanted a new heart? And the practical cruelty of the experiment is yet more to be deplored, than its want of consideration. Had the problem been how to discourage most effectually every ingenuous struggle of childhood, no readier or surer method could have been devised.

Simply to tell a child, as he just begins to make acquaintance with words, that he "must have a new heart before he can be good," is to inflict a double discouragement. First, he cannot guess what this technical phraseology means, and thus he takes up the impression that he can do

or think nothing right, till he is able to comprehend what is above his age—why then should he make the endeavor? Secondly, he is told that he must have a new heart *before* he can be good, not that he may hope to exercise a renewed spirit, *in* the endeavor to be good—why then attempt what must be worthless, till something *previous* befalls him? Discouraged thus on every side, his tender soul turns hither and thither, in hopeless despair, and finally he consents to be what he must—a sinner against God, and that only. Well is it, under such a process, wearing down his childish soul into soreness and despair of good, sealing up his nature in silence and cessation as regards all right endeavors, and compelling him to turn his feelings into other channels, where he shall find his good in evil—well is it, I say, if he has not contracted a dislike to the very subject of religion, as inveterate as the subject is impossible.

Many teach in this way, no doubt, with the best intentions imaginable, their design is only to be faithful, and sometimes they appear even to think that the more they discourage their children, the better and more faithful they are. But the mistake, if not cruelly meant, is certainly most cruel in the experience; and it is just this mistake, I am confident, which accounts for a large share of the unhappy failures made by Christian parents, in the training of their children. Rather should they begin with a kind of teaching suited to the age of the child. First of all, they should rather seek to teach a feeling than a doctrine, to bathe the child in their own feeling of love to God, and dependence on him, and contrition for wrong before him, bearing up their child's heart in their own, not fearing to encourage every good motion they can call into exercise; to make what is good, happy and attractive; what is wrong, odious and hateful; then as the understanding advances, to give it food suited to its capacity, opening upon it, gradually the more difficult views of Christian doctrine and experience.

Sometimes Christian parents fail of success in the religious training of their children, because the church counteracts their effort and example. The church makes a bad atmosphere about the house, and the poison comes in at the doors and windows. It is rent by divisions, burnt up by fanaticism, frozen by the chill of a worldly spirit, petrified in a rigid and dead orthodoxy. It makes no element of genial warmth and love about the child, according to the intention of Christ in its appointment, but gives to religion, rather, a forbidding aspect, and thus, instead of assisting the parent, becomes one of the worst impediments to his success. What kind of element the world makes about the child is of little consequence; for here there is no pretence of piety. But when the school of Christ itself becomes an element of sin and death, the child's baptism becomes as great a fiction as the church itself, and the arrangements of divine mercy fail of their intended power. There are, in short, too many ways of accounting for the failure of success, in the family training of those who are remarkable for their piety, without being led to doubt the correctness of my argument in these discourses.

To sum up all, we conclude, not that every child can certainly be made to grow up in Christian piety—nothing is gained by asserting so much, and perhaps I could not prove it to be true, neither can any one prove the contrary —I merely show that this is the true idea and aim of Christian nurture as a nurture of the Lord. It is presumptively true that such a result can be realized, just as it is presumptively true that a school will forward the pupils in knowledge, though possibly sometimes it may fail to do it. And, without such a presumption, no parent can do his duty and fill his office well, any more than it is possible to make a good school, in the expectation that the scholars will learn something five or ten years hence, and not before.

To give this subject its practical effect, let me urge it—

1. Upon the careful attention of those who neglec decline, offering their children in baptism. Some of are simply indifferent to this duty, not seeing what goo can do to baptize a child; others have positive theolog objections to it. With the former class I certainly ag so far as to admit that baptism, as an operation, can d good to your child; but, if it has no importance in w it operates, it has the greatest importance in what it nifies; and, what is more to be deplored by you, the w holding it signifies as much, viz: that you yourselves h no sense of the relation that subsists between your ch acter and that of your child, and as little of the me that Christ intends for your child, by including him w you in his fold, to grow up there by your side in the sa common hopes. Had you any just sense of these thi you would look upon the baptism of your child as a rite as great importance and spiritual propriety as your ow for, in neither case, has the form any value beyond whs signifies. The other class among you suffer the sa defect; for it is my settled conviction that no man e objected to infant baptism, who had not at the bottom of objections, false views of Christian education—who did hold a notion of individualism, in regard to Christian ch acter in childhood, which is justified, neither by obser tion nor by Scripture.

It is the prevalence of false views, on this subject, whi creates so great difficulty in sustaining infant baptism our churches. If children are to grow up in sin, to converted when they come to the age of maturity, if th is the only aim and expectation of family nurture, the really is no meaning or dignity whatever in the ri They are even baptized unto sin, and every propriety the rite as a seal of faith is violated. And it is the feeli of this impropriety, which lies at the basis of all yo objections. Returning to the old Scripture doctrine of

organic law, connecting the child morally with the parents, so that he is, as it were, included in them, to grow up in their life; perceiving then that a child is a kind of rudimental being, coming up gradually into a separate and complete individuality, having the parental life extended to him, first, with an almost absolutely controlling power, then less and less, till he takes, at length, the helm of his own spirit—every difficulty that you now feel vanishes, and the rite of infant baptism becomes one of the greatest beauty, and perfectly coincident with the spirit and the rules of adult baptism. The very command, "believe and be baptized," of which so much is made, is exactly met, and with no modifications, save what are necessary to suit the peculiar state and age of childhood: for the child, being included as it were in the parental life, is accounted presumptively one with the parent, and sealed with the seal of their faith.

And it would certainly be very singular, if Christ Jesus, in a scheme of mercy for the world, had found no place for infants and little children: more singular still, if he had given them the place of adults; and worse than singular, if he had appointed them to years of sin as the necessary preparation for his mercy. But if you see him counting them one with you, bringing them tenderly into his fold with you, there to grow up in him, you will not doubt that he has given them a place exactly and beautifully suited to them. And is it for you to withhold them from that place? Is it worthy of your tenderness, as a Christian parent, to leave them outside of the fold, when the gate is open, only taking care to go in yourself? I will not accuse you of intended wrong, but I am quite sure your thoughts are not as God's thoughts, and I ask you to study this question again, and more deeply. You are giving your children, as they grow up, impressions that will assuredly be very injurious to them, and robbing them of impressions that would have great power and value to their minds.

What can be worse, what can make them aliens more sibly from Christ's sympathies, what can more effectu discourage and chill them to all thoughts of a good than to make them feel that Christ has no place for th till their sins are ripe, and they are capable of a gr that is now above their years? What more persuas than to know that he has taken them into his school alrea to grow up round him as disciples. And if God sh call you to himself, what will draw upon their hearts n tenderly, than to remember that the father and mo whose name they revere, brought them believingly in t themselves, to be owned in that general assembly of just which occupies both worlds, and become partal with them there, in the grace which is now their song.

You rob yourselves too of an influence which is necess to a right fulfillment of your duty. Their character, say, is their own; let them believe for themselves and baptized when they will. You have never the same ge feeling that you would, if you regarded them as more linked to your character and drawing from you the m of their being. You are not kept in the same state of ca fulness and spiritual tenderness. No matter if you cold to them, at times, and do not always live Christ in house, they are growing up to be converted, and alm any thing is good enough for conversion! Christ himse too, has no such relation to you, in your family, as to m your piety a domestic spirit. He has not gathered yo children round you, as a flock of young disciples, pour all his tenderness into your family, ties to make th vehicles of mercy and blessing. Once more I ask you consider whether God is not better to you than you yo selves have thought, and whether, in withholding yo children from God, you are not like to fall as far short your duty, as you do of the privilege offered you.

2. *What motives* are laid upon all Christian parents,

the doctrine I have established, to make the first article of family discipline a constant and careful discipline of themselves. I would not undervalue a strong and decided government in families. No family can be rightly trained without it. But there is a kind of virtue, my brethren, which is not in the rod—the virtue, I mean, of a truly good and sanctified life. And a reign of brute force is much more easily maintained, than a reign whose power is righteousness and love. There are, too, I must warn you, many who talk much of the rod as the orthodox symbol of parental duty, but who might really as well be heathens as Christians; who only storm about their house with heathenish ferocity, who lecture, and threaten, and castigate, and bruise, and call this family government. They even dare to speak of this as the nurture of the Lord. So much easier is it to be violent than to be holy, that they substitute force for goodness and grace, and are wholly unconscious of the imposture. It is frightful to think how they batter and bruise the delicate, tender souls of their children, extinguishing in them what they ought to cultivate, crushing that sensibility which is the hope of their being, and all in the sacred name of Christ Jesus. By no such summary process can you dispatch your duties to your children. You are not to be a savage to them, but a father and a Christian. Your real aim and study must be to infuse into them a new life, and, to this end, the Life of God must perpetually reign in you. Gathered round you as a family, they are all to be so many motives, strong as the love you bear them, to make you Christ-like in your spirit. It must be seen and felt with them that religion is a first thing with you. And it must be first, not in words and talk, but visibly first in your love—that which fixes your aims, feeds your enjoyments, sanctifies your pleasures, supports your trials, satisfies your wants, contents your ambition, beautifies and blesses your character. No mock

piety, no sanctimony of phrase, or longitude of fa
Sundays will suffice. You must live in the light of
and hold such a spirit in exercise as you wish to see
lated into your children. You must take them into
feelings, as a loving and joyous element, and beget, if l
grace of God you may, the spirit of your own heart in t

This is Christian education, the nurture of the
Ah, how dismal is the contrast of a half-worldly, c
piety, proposing money as the good thing of life, s
lating ambition for place and show, provoking ill-natu
petulance and falsehood, praying to save the rule of fi
worship, having now and then a religious fit, and, wl
is on, weeping and exhorting the family to undo al
the life has taught them to do; and then, when the pa
have burnt out their fire, dropping down again to sl
the cinders, only hoping still that the family will som
be converted! When shall we discover that families
to be ruined by such training as this? When sha
turn ourselves wholly to God, and looking on our chi
as one with us and drawing their character from us,
them arguments to duty and constancy—duty and
stancy not as a burden, but, since they are enforce
motives so dear, our pleasure and delight. For thes
and duties exist not for the religious good of our chi
only, but quite as much for our own. And God
understands us well, has appointed them to keep us
perpetual frame of love; for so ready is our bad natu
kindle with our good, and burn with it, that what we
our piety is, otherwise, in constant danger of degener
into a fiery, censorious, unmerciful and intolerant spi

Hence it is that monks have been so prone to per
tion. Not dwelling with children as the objects of
tion, having their hearts softened by no family love,
life identified with no objects that excite gentleness,
nature hardens into a Christian abstraction, and

and doctrine go together. Therefore God hath set Israel in families, that the argument to duty may come upon the gentle side of your nature, and fall, as a baptism, on the head of your natural affections. Your character is to be a parent character, infolding lovingly the spirits of your children, as birds are gathered in the nest, there to be sheltered and fed, and got ready for the flight. Every hour is to be an hour of duty, every look and smile, every reproof and care, an effusion of Christian love. For it is the very beauty of the work you have to do that you are to cherish and encourage good, and live a better life into the spirits of your children.

3. It is to be deeply considered, in connection with this view of family nurture, whether it does not meet many of the deficiencies we deplore in the Christian character of our times, and the present state of our churches. We have been expecting to thrive too much by conquest, and too little by growth. I desire to speak with all caution of what are very unfortunately called revivals of religion; for, apart from the name, which is modern, and from certain crudities and excesses that go with it—which name, crudities, and excesses are wholly adventitious as regards the substantial merits of such scenes—apart from these, I say, there is abundant reason to believe that God's spiritual economy includes varieties of exercise, answering, in all important respects, to these visitations of mercy, so much coveted in our churches. They are needed. A perfectly uniform demonstration in religion is not possible or desirable. Nothing is thus uniform but death. Our exercise varies every year and day from childhood onward. Society is going through new modes of exercise in the same manner, excited by new subjects, running into new types of feeling, and struggling with new combinations of thought. Quite as necessary is it that all holy principle should have a varied exercise—now in one duty, now in another; now

in public aims and efforts, now in bosom struggles; in social methods, now in those which are solitary private; now in high emotion, now in deliberative th and study. Accordingly the Christian church began a scene of extraordinary social demonstration, and like, in one form or another, may be traced in every p of its history since that day.

But the difficulty is with us that we idolize such sc and make them the whole of our religion. We as that nothing good is doing, or can be done at any time. And what is even worse, we often look upon scenes, and desire them, rather as scenes of victory, of piety. They are the harvest-times of conversion conversion is too nearly every thing with us. In pa lar we see no way to gather in disciples, save by mea certain marked experiences, developed in such scen adult years. Our very children can possibly come good, save in this way. Instrumentalities are invent compass our object, that are only mechanical, and the of mere present effect is supposed to justify them. Pr effect, in the view of many, justifies any thing and e thing. We strain every nerve of motion, exhaust e capacity of endurance, and push on till nature sinl exhaustion. We preach too much, and live Christ to tle. We do many things, which, in a cooler mood seen to hurt the dignity of religion, and which some shame and sicken ourselves. Hence the present sta religion in our country. We have worked a vein has run out. The churches are exhausted. There i tle to attract them, when they look upon the renew scenes through which many of them have passed. look about them, with a sigh, to ask if possibly there better way, and some are ready to find that better wa a change of their religion. Nothing different from *ought to have* been expected. No nation can long th

by a spirit of conquest; no more can a church. There must be an internal growth, that is made by holy industry, in the common walks of life and duty.

Let us turn now, not away from revivals of religion, certainly not away from the conviction that God will bring upon the churches tides of spiritual exercise, and vary his divine culture by times and seasons suited to their advancement; but let us turn to inquire whether there is not a fund of increase in the very bosom of the church itself. Let us try if we may not train up our children in the way that they should go. Simply this, if we can do it, will make the church multiply her numbers many fold more rapidly than now, with the advantage that many more will be gained from without than now. For she will cease to hold a mere piety of occasions, a piety whose chief use is to get up occasions; she will follow a gentler and more constant method, as her duty is more constant, and blends with the very life of her natural affections. Her piety will be of a more even and genial quality, and will be more respected. She will not strive and cry, but she will live. The school of John the Baptist will be succeeded by the school of Christ, as a dew comes after a fire. Families will not be a temptation to you, half the time hurrying you on to get money, and prepare a show, and the other half, a motive to repentance and shame, and profitless exhortation; but all the time, an argument for Christian love and holy living.

Then also the piety of the coming age will be deeper, and more akin to habit than yours, because it begun earlier. It will have more of an air of naturalness and will be less a work of will. A generation will come forward, who will have been educated to all good undertakings and enterprises—ardent without fanaticism, powerful without machinery. Not born so generally, in a storm, and brought to Christ by an abrupt transition, the latter portion of life will not have an unequal war to maintain with the begin-

ning, but life will be more nearly one, and in harmony itself. Is not this a result to be desired? Could w our American churches, at this moment, what they s should we not tell them this? Neither, if God, as I fear, is about to bring upon his church a day of wrat stormy conflict, let any one suspect that such a kind of will want vigor and nerve, to withstand the fiery ass anticipated. See what turn the mind of our apostle when he was arming his disciples for the great confli their age. Children, obey your parents—Fathers, pro not your children—Servants, be obedient to your mast Masters, forbear threatening—Finally, to include all, p the whole armor of God. As if the first thought, in ar the church for great trials and stout victories, was t common life and the relations of the house with a Chri spirit. There is no truer truth or more sublime. Rel never thoroughly penetrates life, till it becomes dom Like that patriotic fire which makes a nation invincit never burns with inextinguishable devotion, till it bur the hearth.

4. Parents who are not religious in their character, reason, in our subject, seriously to consider what effect are producing, and likely to produce, in their chil Probably you do not wish them to be irreligious; parents have the hardihood or indiscretion to desire th fear of God, the salutary restraints of religion, shoul removed from their children. Possibly you exert y selves, in a degree to give them religious counsel an struction. But, alas! how difficult is it for you to vince them, by words, of the value of what you practi reject yourselves. Have I not shown you that they set in organic connection with you, to draw their spirit principles, and character from yours? What then are daily deriving from you, but that which you yours reveal, in your prayerless house, and at your thanl

table? Is it a spirit of duty and Christian love, a faith that has its home and rest in other worlds, or is it the carnal spirit of gain, indifference to God, deadness to Christ, and love of the world, pride, ambition, all that is earthly, nothing that is heavenly?

Do not imagine that you have done corrupting them, when they are born. Their character is yet to be born, and, in you, is to have its parentage. Your spirit is to pass into them, by a law of transition that is natural, and well nigh irresistible. And then you are to meet them in a future life, and see how much of blessing or of sorrow they will impute to you—to share their unknown future, and look upon yourselves as father and mother to their destiny. Such thoughts, I know, are difficult for you to meet; difficult because they open real scenes, which you are, one day, to look upon. Loving these your children, as most assuredly you do, can you think that you are fulfilling the office that your love requires? Go home to your Christless house, look upon them all as they gather round you, and ask it of your love faithfully to say, whether it is well between you? And if no other argument can draw you to God, let these dear living arguments come into your soul, and prevail there.

ARGUMENT

FOR

DISCOURSES ON CHRISTIAN NURTURE.*

DEAR BRETHREN: Your decision, when suspending sale of my little book, to do it without 'publicity,' kindly designed; but, inasmuch as I heard of it in streets the very next day, I should have been quite as satisfied if you had not extended a show of protectio my infirmity, which after all was to be so precarious. will, at least, make no complaint, under the circumstan if I publish the suspension myself.

The history of this little book is worthy of rec When I returned from Europe, I found that certain p graphs of an article which I had published in the N Englander had provoked some feeling of dissent, in ministerial Association to which I belong, and that I appointed to discuss a question made up on the subject *Christian training*, involving the matter dissented from. produced two discourses on the question, for my pul and read the argument before the Association. The qu tion was then discussed by the members present. I do recollect that any one seriously objected to the views giv or desired any correction more radical than the addit of some verbal qualifications. A venerable father, wh

* The whole title, as originally printed, was, "An Argument Discourses on Christian Nurture, addressed to the Publishing C *mittee of the* Massachusetts Sabbath-School Society."

name is a name of confidence and respect, second to no other in our churches, offered a motion that I should be requested to print the discourses.* No one objected, and the vote was passed, I believe, *nem. con.* They were not produced for publication, but my strong conviction of the importance of the subject and of the view presented, induced me afterwards to comply; and while I was preparing them for publication, in another manner, one of the members of your committee requested me to allow your Society to publish them. I felt some doubt, which I expressed, whether your Society would do it; not because there is any thing in the practical view presented, which conflicts with, or may not with very slight modifications be adopted into the received opinions of any theological school known among us; but because the view itself is different from that commonly held, and was likely not to meet a ready acceptance.

Your committee had the manuscript in their possession for five or six months. It made its first impression as anonymous. I have understood that it was much discussed, and finally that every member of your large committee actually read it for himself. I have understood also that you had no doubt of the substantial orthodoxy of the discourses; but had, as I expected you would have, much hesitancy in regard to the impression they would make on the public. You sent the manuscript back to me twice, for the insertion of qualifications and the modification of phrases; in which, as it cost me no change of opinion, I was ready to gratify you. Finally, after a long pause of three or four months, such as generally precedes some great convulsion of nature, the "Discourses on Christian Nurture" were published. Some little commendatory notices appeared. The most strongly Calvinistic, and, as many

* There is a slight mistake in this. The person alluded to only seconded the motion.

judge, the most thoroughly respectable Congregatio paper in New England, (precisely what I should ha expected,) was full and decided in its commendation, a published extracts, I have been told, for the benefit of readers. It was noticed with qualified favor, (which a I should have expected,) by a very candid and high respected writer in the Episcopal paper of this city. seemed about to get audience, in fact, before the public, wi out producing any alarm whatever.

But the day was coming. A 'Letter' addressed to t was at length published, under the "*unanimous*" sancti of the North Association of Hartford county, in which t most serious objections are made to the 'Discourses;' a particularly that they are full of "dangerous tendencies The 'Letter' is a remarkably quiet epistle, but it has be very industriously circulated, and the "dangerous tende cies," like the fuse hissing upon a bomb, have thrown t ancient and honorable commonwealth of Massachuset including, for aught that appears, the Ancient and Hono ble Artillery Company itself, into a general panic. H far the American Sunday-School Union, which is a riv institution to your Society, has exerted itself through agents to increase the panic, I know only by repo Enough, that when I attended the General Association your state at Worcester, a few days ago, I encounter manifestations on every side, which, if they did not alar did a little surprise me. I found myself enveloped in a atmosphere of sensibility. It was proposed, I understoo to the committee of business, to place upon their docke as one article, the administration of some rebuke to yo Society, for publishing so corrupt a book. In reading th Reports of the District Associations on the state of religio one of the readers contrived to interline a personal snee at me, for the entertainment of the audience. And amon other demonstrations of courtesy, which I was permitted t

receive as a stranger, it was industriously whispered, I was told, that what I had said in the "Advertisement" to my little book, of being requested by the Association to publish it, is not true!—a civility that has since come into print, in certain periodicals of Boston. In the dignity of these demonstrations, unless you have methods of exhibiting sensibility in your state that are quite peculiar to yourselves, it is manifest that I have touched the quick of theologic odium. And now, when your numerous committee, after having sifted my manuscript till the paper itself was near giving out in the process, coming thus to the deliberate conclusion that there is no bad error in it, and finally giving it to the public, return to give me notice that you feel obliged, for a time at least, to suspend the publication; it is evident that the excitement must finally have reached the pitch, usually called, in newspaper phrase, "great consternation."

Is it now too much to ask of your friends in Massachusetts, that they will descend from the tragic altitude of their resentments, long enough to go through, with me, a brief comparison of my doctrine of Christian nurture, with doctrines and opinions formerly held by men of acknowledged soundness in the faith? I ask it, not because I do not feel myself at liberty, when truth seems to require it, to defy all human authorities; but simply because it is pleasant to have the sanction of venerable names, when we may, and especially since there seem to be many who are more fit subjects of authority than of reason. I made some reference in the 'Discourses,' to what had been the views of Christian teachers in past ages. If I erred in not being more full on that subject, I will now supply the deficiency, not without some confidence that this panic, before which you have yielded, will be discovered, like many others which have troubled the world, to have had its birth in ignorance.

If I give you reason to believe that the same doctrine of Christian nurture was held by the church of the apostolic age, in connection with infant baptism, after which the rite fell into long ages of abuse, where its proper meaning was lost out of mind; then that when the Reformation came, it brought no such view of it to light, that the reformers and fathers and learned professors whom we have most in confidence, have ever, down to the present day, had any fixed agreement among themselves, in regard to the state of childhood as connected with baptism, or the meaning of the rite itself, and have advanced continually different theories without offence—some of them regarded as even ultra orthodox, asserting the precise doctrine of nurture which I have maintained; if I show you moreover that the very type of religion which has produced this extraordinary sensitiveness to my book, is in fact a novelty itself just a hundred years old, being that which was derisively called "New Light" in its day, and which now is taken to be really synonymous with antiquity and all orthodoxy; - a type of religion which approaches strict individualism, which practically hangs all power and progress on adult conversions, which flowered in the brilliant era of Burchard and Knapp, and is now dying under mildew or passing into seed;—showing you this, I think your committee will at least find some confirmation of their judgment, and the subjects of this panic some solution of the very peculiar courtesy and intellectual dignity that have attended their demonstrations.

In the 'Discourses,' (pp. 35–6) I quoted two passages, one from Justin Martyr, the other from Ireneus, which are, at once, proofs of the existence of infant baptism; also, that the rite was, in that early age, called regeneration; also, that the subjects were accounted and treated as disciples. In the third chapter of John also, and in Titus iii. 5, we see that *water* and *regeneration* are already cognate terms,

and that the language of the church in the age succeeding, is no departure from the language of Scripture itself. [Compare Colman's Christ. Antiq. p. 265.]

We also find inscriptions on the monuments of children, considered by antiquarians to be of a very early age, probably of the first two or three centuries, in which they are called *fideles* i. e. *faithfuls*. The following is an example:

"A *faithful* descended of *faithfuls*, here lies Zosimus. He lived two years, one month and twenty-five days." *Buonarotti*, 17. *Fabretti*, cap. 4.

Turning now to Acts xvi. 15, we find Lydia, after her baptism, speaking of herself as one adjudged to be *faithful*. And then passing to Titus i. 6, where it is prescribed that the elder shall be one "having *faithful* children," we become apprised of the fact that the children of disciples were accustomed also then to be called *faithfuls*, as afterwards, and in common with disciples of a mature age. Nor let it be said that the words which follow in the latter passage—"not accused of riot, or unruly," (that is, not in bad repute as a wild, ill-governed family,) show that the term *faithful* relates to children who are truly believers. When does it occur to us to call children *faithfuls* because they are well behaved? Manifestly, the term has reference to just that age when, being called *faithfuls* on account of their baptism, good behavior and Christian manners were the only or principal evidence of Christian character to be looked for. And that every father is able so to train up his children that they may properly deserve this title, is so far assumed that, if he fails to do it, the fact must be taken as presumptive evidence against him, as being one who is unfit to rule as an elder in the church.

Then again, we open the Epistle to the Ephesians and we find it addressed to the "Saints at Ephesus and the *faithful* in Christ Jesus," which, making nothing of the particular words employed, does at least mean that the

epistle is addressed to *Christian brethren*. And among tl "*children*" are directly addressed, in the same way as c members of the fraternity. The same is true in the Ep to the Colossians, and also in the first Epistle of John. which, apart from all theories, we see children famili recognized, with their parents, among the *adult* Chri disciples, and addressed in the second person, with as l thought of impropriety as the adults themselves.

If now we ask, in what view all these facts and us of the first churches had their explication, no better swer can be given, than that which is offered by Nean Shortly after advancing, about ten years ago, the same v of Christian nurture maintained in my 'Discourses,' I upon the following passage in his Church History, by wh as I was young in the truth, I was greatly supported. was precisely this that I had in my mind, when I said my tract, that my doctrine is "as old as the Chris church." Better authority will hardly be required. ' passage relates, it will be seen, to the import of infant l tism, or to the practical ideas originally held in connec with infant baptism. And he has in view the two passa of Justin Martyr and Ireneus just referred to.

"It is the idea of infant baptism that Christ, through the divin which he imparted to, and revealed in, human nature, sanctified germ from its earliest development. The child born in a Chris family was, when all things were as they should be, to have this ad tage over others, that he did not come to Christianity out of heat ism or the sinful natural life, but from the first dawning of sciousness unfolded his powers under the imperceptible, preven influences of a sanctifying, ennobling religion; that with the ear germinations of the natural self-conscious life, another divine princ of life, transforming the nature, should be brought nigh to him, yet the ungodly principle could come into full activity, and the h should, at once, find here its powerful counterpoise. In such a the new birth was not to constitute a new crisis, beginning at a definable moment, but it was to begin imperceptibly, and so pro through the whole life. Hence baptism, the visible sign of regenerat was to be given to the child at the very outset: the child was to be secrated to the Redeemer from the very beginning of its life."—*N der's Church History, Torrey's translation*, pp. 311, 312.

A more popular and practical view of Christianity, as seen in the domestic life of families, and one, at the same time, wholly coincident, is given by Cave.

"Gregory Nazianzen peculiarly commends his mother, that not only she herself was consecrated to God, and brought up under a pious education, *but that she conveyed it down, as a necessary inheritance*, to her children; and it seems her daughter Gorgonia was so well seasoned with these holy principles, that she religiously walked in the steps of so good a pattern; and did not only reclaim her husband, but educated her children and nephews in the ways of religion, giving them an excellent example while she lived, and leaving this, as her last charge and request when she died. * * * * * This was the *discipline* under which Christians were brought up in those times. Religion was *instilled into them betimes, which grew up and mixed itself with their ordinary labors and recreations.* * * * * * * * So that Jerome says, of the place where he lived, you could not go into the field, but you might hear the plowman at his hallelujahs, the mower at his hymns, and the vine-dresser singing David's Psalms."—*Primitive Christianity*, pp. 173, 174.

But when the Christian ministry became changed into a priesthood, and external rites, performed by priestly hands, were regarded as having a magical power in themselves, Christian nurture was, in fact, superseded. Indeed, the whole matter of religion, as well in the case of adults as of infants, was dispensed by the priesthood, whose prerogative it was to open heaven to all.

To follow the church into all the absurd opinions of this subject through which she strayed for long ages, is unnecessary. We descend immediately to the Reformation, and the views developed between that period and the present. And here we shall find that no settled opinion on the subject of infant baptism and of Christian nurture has ever been attained to. Between the standard Protestant writers themselves there has been no agreement. And yet we shall distinguish, here and there, gleams of the doctrine I have advanced in the 'Discourses,' and finally in some of the accredited theologians, both of England and of New England, a doctrine carefully matured and fully stated, so nearly identical with that by which I have frightened the

over-sensitive orthodoxy of some, as to leave room for important distinction.

It is difficult to assign a precise and definite meaning what Luther advanced on this subject. We know tha taught and held the most rigid views of election, and he says:

"Paul commendeth and setteth it [baptism] forth with honou titles, calling it the washing of the new birth, the renewing of the Ghost.—Tit. 3. And here also [Gal. iii. 27] he saith, that all they w are baptized have put on Christ. As if he said, 'Ye are carried ou the law into a new birth, which is wrought in baptism.' Wherei baptism is a thing of great force and efficacy."—*Comm. in loc.*

This certainly is not any doctrine which I have advanc Indeed, it seems to convey a strong scent of the old er in which he had been trained, and out of which he not yet fully emancipated. Calvin is more intelligent, appears to have carried his thoughts farther into the s ject. His opinion seems to be that the elect infants, they only, have any advantage in baptism.

"Christ was sanctified from his earliest infancy, that he m sanctify in himself all his elect.

"But how, it is inquired, are infants regenerated who hav knowledge either of good or evil? We reply that the work of Gc not yet *without existence because it is not observed or understood by* Now it is certain that some infants are saved, and that they are viously regenerated by the Lord is beyond all doubt."

"They are baptized into future repentance and faith; for the these graces have not yet been formed in them, *the seeds of both nevertheless implanted in their hearts by the secret operations of Spirit.*"—*Inst.* cap. xvi. § 17, 18, 20.

I claim no authority under this view of Calvin, save t in the words italicised he falls into the same deadly er imputed to me, when I say in the 'Discourses,' that "reg erate character may exist long before it is fully and fo ally developed." Owen uses language hardly reconcila with Calvin, unless it can be shown either that all infa who die are elect, or that all elect infants die.

"The children of believers are all of them capable of the gr signified in baptism, and some of them are certainly partakers of *viz: such as* die in their infancy."

"God having appointed baptism as the sign and seal of regeneration, * * * it follows that infants, who die in their infancy, have the grace of regeneration, and consequently as good a right to baptism as believers themselves."—*Owen's Works*, vol. xxi. 549.

We come now to Ridgely, whose doctrine appears to hold a different cast, in which it is more strongly resembled to the view advanced in my 'Discourses,' as will appear on a comparison of the two following passages:

"I think those arguments which are generally brought to prove that the infants of believing parents, as such, have the seeds of faith, can *hardly* be defended."

"Baptism is an external sign of that faith and hope, which he has that dedicates a person to God, that the person dedicated shall obtain *the saving blessings* of the covenant of grace. * * * * * Indeed, when we engage in this ordinance, we ought to *expect some saving blessings* as the consequence thereof, as much as when we engage in any other ordinance of divine appointment."—*Ridgeley's Body of Divinity, fol.* vol. ii. 409.

Precisely how much is intended in this language, it may be difficult to say, without a more thorough acquaintance with the author's opinions generally than I possess, but it has a very different cast from that of Calvin or Owen.

Baxter was a man of motion, and we shall see that the working of his mercurial mind has carried him into a direct scrutiny of the relation itself of parents and children. I hope our censors of orthodoxy will deal gently with him, if, in the passage that follows, he is found asserting the same doctrine of "organic" power and character as that into which I have ventured so rashly.

"Q. *Why then are they baptized who cannot covenant?*

"A. As children are made sinners and miserable by the parents, without any act of their own, so they are delivered out of it by the free grace of Christ, upon a condition performed by their parents. Else they who are visibly born in sin and misery should have no certain or visible way of remedy. Nature maketh them, as it were, *parts of* their parents, or so near as causeth their sin and misery. And this nearness supposed, God, by his free grace, hath put it in the power of the parents to accept for them the blessings of the covenant, and to enter them into the covenant of God, *the parents' will being instead of their own, who have yet no will to choose* for themselves."—*Teacher of Householders fol.* vol. ii. p. 135.

The next passage I cite, as one that is remarkable containing, in a single sentence, almost every point doctrine involved in my view of Christian nurture, with professing to give any theory at all of that subject; "secret seeds" of a new character planted by "education" before "actual acquaintance with Christ"—"stirri working and reaching after further grace"—all in suc way that the new character gets a start of what is evil i "ungodly." The only thing wanting is that such a res is not set up as the aim of parental training, but is men affirmed of "*some*" children. Yet of such a number, t when we come to "*confirmation*," which he is here co mending, two classes are to be made—those who are to h simple "*confirmation*" and those who are first to have "*solution*." And if some children are to be confirmed wi out absolution, it is making a very practical matter certai of the possibility that children may "*grow up*" in piety.

"Of those baptized in infancy, some do betimes receive the se seeds of grace, which, by the blessings of a holy education, is stirr in them according to their capacity, and working them to God actual desires, and working them from all known sin, and entertaini further grace, and turning them into actual acquaintance with Chr as soon as they arrive at full natural capacity, so that they *never u* actual ungodly persons."—*Confirmation*, *fol.* vol. iv. p. 267.

The citation that follows brings us to the same result a different method—showing, in particular, the relati importance in Baxter's view of Christian nurture a Christian preaching as the instrument of adult conversio The italics are his own.

"Ungodly parents do serve the devil so effectually, in the fi impressions on their children's minds, that it is more than magistra and ministers and all reforming means can afterwards do to reco them from that sin to God. Whereas, if you would first engage th hearts to God by a religious education, *piety* would then have those advantages that sin hath now. (Prov. xxii. 6.) The *langua* which you teach them to speak when they are children, they will u all their life after, if they live with those that use it. And so t *opinions* which they first receive, and the customs which they u used to at first are very hardly changed afterwards. I doubt not

affirm, that *a godly education is God's first and ordinary appointed means, for the begetting of actual faith and other graces in the children of believers.* Many have *received grace* before; but they cannot sooner have *actual faith, repentance, love,* or any grace that they may have *reason* itself, in *act* and exercise. And the preaching of the word by public ministers is not the *first ordinary means of grace,* to any but those that were graceless till they come to hear such preaching; that is, to those on whom the *first appointed means* hath been neglected or proved vain; * * * * therefore it is apparent that the *ordinary appointed means, for the first actual grace, is parents'* godly *instruction and education of their children.* And public preaching is appointed for the conversion of those only that have missed the blessing of the first appointed means."—*Christian Directory,* vol. ii. cap. 6, § 4, *folio,* p. 516.

One passage more from Baxter, in which he teaches my censors the difference between presuming forwards and backwards; forwards on the faith of God's promises and offered privileges, and backwards on results that involve our own personal fidelity and righteousness. Though, undoubtedly, the presumption that a child *will* grow up a Christian is to be retained, until it is displaced by *sufficient evidence.*

"It is a probable argument—'*Such an infant is born of Christian parents; therefore he will be an actual believer.*' But it is not a probable argument—'*Such a man, at age, that professeth not Christianity, had Christian parents; therefore he is a believer.*'"—*Postscript, fol.* vol. iv. p. 303.

From the best and most respected authorities in the Church of England, I might bring declarations to the same effect without number, but as their view of baptism is different generally from any that we are able to admit, I desist, only adding one as an example.

"Here is the consequent fruit and benefit of a good education—*And when he is old he will not depart from it.* Thus we are to understand, according to the moral probability of things; not as if this happy effect did always and infallibly follow upon the good education of a child; but that this very frequently is and may probably be presumed and hoped to be, the fruit and effect of a pious and prudent education.—*Tillotson's Works,* vol. iii. p. 179.

But we pass the sea. And now the question is, what opinions have been held on this subject by our New England divines? And first of all it will be evident here, on examination, that no settled opinion of the grounds or

import of infant baptism has ever been attained to, certai none that will authorize Christian men to denounce, heretical and dangerous, every other opinion that n chance to differ from their own. Do we hold that bapti accrues to the special benefit of elect infants? I certai do not. Is there any one of your respectable committ who entertains the distinction of elect and non-elect infa at all? We may not have reasoned ourselves out of this o familiar distinction, as pertaining to infants; but it is go time has killed it. Do we hold that baptism accrues to benefit of infants that die? What better possibly, what b ter, in common opinion, is the condition of infants that baptized than if they were not baptized? But there is son thing like a covenant made in this matter of baptis Even so, in this we all agree. But what is the covena what meaning and force has it? Here we never ha agreed, and do not now. The Baptists have pushed us an answer; we have given them many answers, but nev any single answer in which we could agree ourselve And so conscious was Edwards, in his debate on t "Half-way Covenant," of the ambiguity resting on th point, that he purposely put the subject by, saying:

"Though I have no doubts about the doctrine of infant baptism, y God's manner of dealing with such infants as are regularly dedicat to him in baptism, is a matter liable to great disputes, and would requi a large dissertation to clear it up."—*Edwards' Works*, vol. i. p. 90.

Our fathers had been accustomed, in Europe, to Stat churches, in which baptism practically gave a title to com plete membership. But they organized their churche here, as may be seen by the Cambridge Platform of 1648 on a different principle, allowing none to be members, sav such as gave evidence of spiritually renewed character Meantime, none were allowed to be voters in the common wealth, except in the Hartford and Providence colonies unless they were members of the church; and since they

were not able to rid themselves of this latter political error, which they had brought over among their many European prejudices, the correction they had made, in their views of church membership, only brought them into trouble and confusion. For they began to find, as soon as their sons were grown to manhood, that many of them were in fact aliens in the State; and, what was more uncomfortable to most Christians of that age than we can well imagine, the children of their sons and daughters often could not be baptized. Hence another synod was convened, A. D. 1662, to find some method of relieving these difficulties. And this was done, by allowing to all baptized persons, living reputably as regards outward character, and professing a speculative assent to the Christian doctrines, a modified or half membership—that is, so far to be accounted members as to have a right of baptism for their children, and thus to become voters in the State. This decision was stoutly opposed by some of the ablest and best men in the synod, and the matter was earnestly debated afterwards through the press. The result was undoubtedly bad in theory, as it proved also to be in its practical effects. But we are not to suppose that the error introduced was a fruit of Arminianism, as many are wont to speak. The synod were high Calvinists probably to a man, and many of the Calvinistic fathers of the first age were still alive and present to assist in the result. That they had never as yet attained to any settled opinion of the import of baptism, as applied to children, since renouncing the view of the European State churches, is evident from the fact that they fell into so great a diversity of opinion, and also that such a man as Increase Mather actually changed sides after the synod.

In the account of the synod and of the debate that followed, as given by Cotton Mather, three positions are advanced, which are specially noticeable as elements of right opinion and from which probably neither party dissented.

1. That the children of Christian parents, trained in Christian way, often grow up as spiritually renewed p sons, and must indeed be accounted true disciples of Chr until some evidence conclusive to the contrary is given their conduct.

"Children of the covenant have *frequently* the beginning of gr wrought in them in younger years, as Scripture and experience sh Instance Joseph, Samuel, David, Solomon, Abijah, Josiah, Dan John Baptist, Timothy. Hence this sort of persons, [baptized perso showing nothing to the contrary, are, in charity, or to ecclesiast reputation, visible believers."—*Magnalia, Book V. fol.* p. 72.

2. That baptism supposes an initial state of piety, or so right beginning, in which the child is prepared unto go by causes prior to his own will.

"We are to distinguish between faith and the *hopeful beginning* of the charitable judgment whereof runs upon a great latitude, and fi in the *special exercise* of it, unto the visible discovery whereof, m experienced operations are to be inquired after. The words of Ames are: 'Children are not to be admitted to partake of all chu privileges, till first *increase* of faith do appear, but from those wh belong to the *beginning* of faith and entrance into the church they not to be excluded.'"—*Magnalia, Book V. fol.* p. 77.

3. That there is a kind of individualism which runs ou to evil; that the church is designed to be an organic, vit grace-giving power, and thus a nursery of spiritual life its children.

"The way of the Anabaptists, to admit none to membership b baptism but adult professors, is the straitest way; one would think should be a way of great purity; but experience hath shewed tha has been an inlet unto great corruption. If we do not keep in the w of a *converting, grace-giving covenant*, and keep persons under th church dispensations wherein grace is given, the church will die o lingering though not violent death. The Lord hath not set up churcl only that a *few old* Christians may keep one another warm while th live, and then carry away the church with them when they die; b but that they might with all care, and with all the obligations a advantages to that care that may be, *nurse* still successively anoth generation of subjects to our Lord, that may stand up in his kingdo when they are gone."—*Magnalia, Book V. fol.* p. 81.

How sentiments like these came to be urged, in suppo of the mongrel scheme of church membership proposed l

the synod, is not altogether clear; for so far from encouraging the extension of a merely formal rite, they conduct us rather to a restricted application, where it may be the seal of existing faith, and retain, by that means, a real and earnest significance. And I judge, from the representations of Mather, that sentiments of this kind were concurred in by the opposing party in the synod, and were actually urged as arguments against the issue proposed. However this may be, for I have not had recourse to the original pamphlets and debates of the period, it is quite certain that these sentiments were held by a large majority of the synod; and any one, at all acquainted with the general current of opinions and practices in the Reformed churches, will also see that sentiments like these had descended upon them and were likely to be held by them all. The quotation from Dr. Ames, (together with those I have made from Calvin and Ridgely,) is a more specific evidence to the same effect.

At a later period, Mr. Stoddard, of Northampton, took the far more consistent and dignified ground that both sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper, are to be regarded as means of grace offered to all who hold the Christian doctrines and maintain a correct outward life. In this opinion he was followed by many. Meantime, under the combined influence of these two changes, or partly by force of other causes operating to depress the intellectual and moral character of the age, practical religion fell into a serious and alarming state of decline. The churches, it is represented, had quite lost their spirituality, and what is worse, had well nigh lost the idea of spriritual life itself. These representations, however, have come to us from the age succeeding, when new scenes and a higher frame of activity, connected with no slight measure of censoriousness, were likely to give an exaggerated air to the declension of the former times. Still, making every allowance

for exaggerations of this nature, there was evidently serious decline of piety in the churches.

And here comes forward Jonathan Edwards, followed b Whitfield, the Tennents, Davenport, and other inferi teachers, introducing a new religious era, the same whi has continued to the present day—the era of extreme in vidualism, of adult conversions, revivals, angular exper ences, hard and violent demonstrations, painful exhaustion and now, at last, of a growing disrespect to spiritual piet itself. To break up the dead formalism that reigned i the churches, Mr. Edwards set up and maintained as th great first truth of religion, the necessity of spiritual rege eration. Having his controversy with the half-way cov nant and the doctrine of Mr. Stoddard, in which he wa obliged to repel a formalistic tendency, he fell, as wa natural, into a spiritualism so intense as practically to hol if not theoretically, that there is no such thing as spiritu piety which does not begin with a definite and conscious dated experience. Depravity imported the same thing a the "unregenerate state" of all who come to the age o reason. That Christian nurture should have been bless of God, so to counterwork the tendencies of a corrupt nature, as to bring the subject forward to the age of mor action, with a heart prepared to obedience, was left out o mind. All adults, not converted after the age of reaso were assumed to be under sin, and addressed as unreco ciled to God. Perhaps the defect of family training ha been so great, in that age of decline, that he might ver naturally and excusably make this assumption. And ye the assumption is not any the less to be regretted, since has entered into the very body of practical religion amon us, and become a fixed element; so that we have acte upon it, from that day forward, and been warped from ou Christian duties and discolored in our piety by it. Th attention he had bestowed on the will gave a still mor

intense form of individualism probably to his teachings. He also undertook, what I believe had never before been attempted, to give a metaphysical idea of the change wrought in regeneration, showing, in terms of analysis, wherein the soul is different from what it was before; and by this means also he threw the individual into a yet more perfect isolation, as regards organic laws and influences, and imparted, though undesignedly, a more violent character to the demonstrations of Christian experience.

Under the head of "*Improvements in Theology*," introduced by his father, the younger Edwards (vol. ii. p. 491) says, that he showed regeneration to consist "*in the communication of a new spiritual sense or taste.*" And this, he goes on to say, was shown to be wrought by the immediate or sole agency of the Holy Spirit, apart from all suasion and choice. "Previous light and knowledge" moreover were shown, he thinks, to have only the same relation to the result that the ram's horns had to the fall of Jericho. Perhaps it was well to endeavor a metaphysical idea of regeneration, and I know not that any first essay could hope to be more successful. But if "improvements in theology" came to a full end, as many suppose, I believe, in the days of Edwards, so that no farther advance is to be considered admissible, it might possibly have been as well, regarding only this particular subject, if they had ended sooner. Hanging every thing thus on miracle, or a pure *ictus Dei*, separate from all instrumental connections of truth, feeling, dependence, motive, and choice, there was manifestly nothing left but to wait for the concussion. It was waiting, in fact, as for the arrival of God in some vision or trance, and since there was no intelligible duty to be done, as means to the end, the disturbed soul was quite sure to fall on conjuration to obtain the desired miracle; cutting itself with the knives of conviction, tearing itself in loud outcries, and leaping round the altar and calling on

the god to come down and kindle his fire. Edwards hi self was a man of too great mental dignity to surrend himself to any flagrant excess; and yet, so strong was sympathy between the general view of religion maint by him and the ecstatic impulses, that he yielded a de of indulgence to trances, visions and other extravaga of his times, which cannot be soberly justified. The in rior characters of the day, from Whitfield down to Dav port, were all for impulses and divine concussions; course, and the churches rushed into scenes of extra gance which present, in the history, a truly mourn picture. The preachers had great hopes, as the "Revivi went on, that the whole people would finally be convert They encouraged outcries, and visions, and trances, a faintings; they counted nothing a conversion which not explode like a rocket in mid heaven, and the numb of these explosions was accepted as the guage of progress. But finally, when confusion had run itself t limit in disgrace, and the fuel of passion was quite burn away, then suddenly the New Light power gave out a motion that is spent, and religion subsided, falling int long and dreary decline.

Edwards himself was greatly disappointed and c grined: for in the beginning of the "Revival," he l viewed it as the harbinger of a new era, even that of Spirit in the latter days. Now, fifteen years later, writes—

"I cannot say that the greater part of supposed converts give rea by their conversation, to suppose that they continue converts. ' proportion may perhaps be more truly represented by the propor of blossoms on a tree, which abide and come to mature fruit, to whole number of blossoms in the spring."—*Life*, p. 460.

Whether he ever discovered the real causes of the fail by which he was disappointed, is perhaps doubtful; yet in his farewell sermon at Northamption, when his h *was bleeding* under the wrongs put upon him by the v

converts in whom he had once rejoiced, it seems to come upon him as a half-discovery, at least, that there might be some better way. And protesting more strongly than ever his confidence in the power of *family religion*, and the essential need of a piety formed by Christian nurture, he says:

"Every Christian family ought to be, as it were, a little church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by his rules. And family education and order are some of the *chief means of grace*. If these fail, *all other means* are likely to prove ineffectual." —Vol. i. p. 90.

Now, so great has been the name and authority of Edwards, that the new era, or, as it has been called in derision, the "*New Light*" era, introduced by him, still continues, and, what is not a little remarkable, we have theological professors, and other distinguished teachers, sworn to the maintenance of orthodoxy, who are actually defending, as synonymous with all antiquity, notions and practices, which are scarcely more than a century old! The type of religion so lately stigmatized as "New Light," is precisely theirs, or only with very slight modifications, and they are actually found assailing me, as a dangerous intruder on their orthodoxy, for maintaining the very opinions of the first churches! Some of our teachers have ventured to make bolder modifications, in the theoretic doctrines of Edwards, but it must be allowed that our type of *practical religion* is still that of the "New Light" age. It has the same virtues and the same defects. It runs to the same kind of excesses, and, as we have lately seen, to those which are scarcely milder in degree. It is a religion that begins explosively, raises high frames, carries little or no expansion, and after the day is spent, subsides into a torpor.

Considered as a distinct era, introduced by Edwards, and extended and caricatured by his contemporaries, it has one great merit and one great defect. The merit is, that it displaced an era of dead formality, and brought in the demand of a truly spiritual and supernatural experience.

The defect is, that it has cast a type of religious indivi
alism, intense beyond any former example. It mal
nothing of the family, and the church, and the orga
powers God has constituted as vehicles of grace. It tal
every man as if he had existed *alone*, presumes that he
unreconciled to God until he has undergone some sudd
and explosive experience, in adult years, or after the s
of reason; demands that experience, and only when it
reached, allows the subject to be an heir of life. Th
on the other side, or that of the Spirit of God, the very
or *ictus* by which the change is wrought, is isolated
individualized, so as to stand in no connection with s
other of God's means or causes—an epiphany, in wh
God leaps from the stars, or some place above, to do a w
apart from all system, or connection with his other wor
Religion is thus a kind of transcendental matter, wh
belongs on the outside of life, and has no part in the l
by which life is organized—a miraculous epidemic, a f
ball shot from the moon, something holy, because it is fi
God, but so extraordinary, so out of place, that it can
suffer any vital connection with the ties, and causes, i
forms, and habits, which constitute the frame of our histo
Hence the desultory, hard, violent, and often extravag
or erratic character it manifests. Hence, in part,
dreary years of decay and darkness, that interspace
months of excitement and victory.

I know not whether it has been some secret sense
these deficiencies, struggling in the mind of many dis
guished teachers in our churches, since the days
Edwards, which has put them on the endeavor to suppl
remedy. Certain it is, that some of our most respec
and prominent divines, Drs. Hopkins, West, and Dwi
among the number, have given their testimony for Ch
tian nurture, in a manner perfectly coincident with
doctrine, by which I have frightened, so uncomfortably,
cautious orthodoxy of some.

Dr. Hopkins was a pupil of Edwards, and I am willing to believe that he received from his master some hints suggested by his own experience, and was thus put upon supplying a view of baptism, as connected with family nurture, which he had very naturally omitted or overlooked in his contest against formalism. Dr. Hopkins occupies no less than sixty pages in his "System of Divinity," in a careful discussion of the nature and design of infant baptism," in which he lays down for his main proposition, in italics, the following

"*That real holiness and salvation are secured to the children of believers by the covenant into which parents enter with God as it respects their children, if the parents faithfully keep covenant, and fulfill what they profess and promise respecting their children, when they offer them in baptism.*"—*System of Divinity*, vol. ii. p. 291.

And he means by this, not that the child shall sometime be converted; for immediately after, on the same page, he says:

"The parent promises, if he and the child shall live, to bring it up for Christ, as belonging to him, as one of the lambs in his flock, and bearing his mark and name, to train it up in the way he should go, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—p. 291.

He uses also other forms of expression, which show that he expected the children to *grow up* in piety, perpetrating the same dire heresy by which I have offended.

"The heart of the children is turned to their parents, when they are disposed to obey them in the Lord, and *grow up* in the exercise of piety and righteousness."—p. 309.

"How can it be expected that they will *grow up* pious children?" &c.—p. 319.

"Then the happy effect of this will be seen in the early piety of the children, who will *grow up* in the fear of God, and walk in his ways." —p. 324.

The very dangerous presumption of piety in the child, which I am supposed to have authorized, is far less cautiously offered by him, when he says:

"The church receive and look upon them as holy and those who shall be saved. So they are as visibly holy, or as really holy, in their view, as their parents are."—p. 319.

How far his theory of conversion would compel him i isolate the act of God by which is wrought the spiritu renovation of a soul, I will not undertake to decid Enough, that he asserts an organic connection of charact between parents and children, as effectual for good as f evil; nay, that they may as truly, and in the same sens transmit holiness as they transmit *existence*. Thus, aft asserting, not more clearly or decidedly than I have don the impossibility that parents should spiritually renew the children, considered as acting by themselves, he says:

"But it does not follow from this, that God has not so constitut the covenant of grace, that holiness shall be communicated, by hi to the children, in consequence of the faithful endeavors of the parents, so that, in this sense, and by virtue of such a constitutio they do by their faithful endeavors convey saving blessings to the children. *In this way* they give existence to their children. G produces their existence by his own Almighty energy; but, by t constitution he has established, they receive their existence from the parents, or by their means. By an established constitution, paren convey moral depravity to their children. And if God has be pleased to make a constitution and appoint a way, in his covenant o grace with man, by which pious parents may convey and commun cate moral rectitude or holiness to their children, they, by using t appointed means, do it as *really and effectually as they communica existence* to them. In this sense, therefore, they may convey and gi holiness and salvation to their children."—pp. 334, 335.

Doubtless I have been somewhat more explicit in what have said of the organic relation of parents and children but when Dr. Hopkins carries over from the parents bot "depravity and grace," by an "established constitution, and both "as really and effectually as existence" itself, am not able to see wherein I go beyond him; save that i showing how the child is in the will, at first, of the parent to be acted in as it were by them, and prepared to more character by causes prior to his own will, I have suggeste the definite boundary of the "established constitution" o Dr. Hopkins, and likewise how it is, or under what philo sophic conditions that they are to "communicate holiness."

I might go on also to show how Dr. Hopkins accoun *for the fail*ures of Christian parents substantially in th

same way as I have done; rebukes the false notions prevalent in regard to Christian training; insists on the essential absurdity of infant baptism, as commonly practiced; charges the current unbelief on this subject to the apostasy of the church, "from the truth once delivered to the saints," to a self-excusing spirit, and the known repugnance of men to duties and doctrines that conflict with their "corrupt inclinations"; finally, that a better day is to come, when the Bible will recover its meaning, and true Christianity, rising to a new pitch of faith and devotion, will practice the duties, and reap the delightful results appropriate to the baptism of children, as an ordinance of God. He touches, in fact, almost all the points made in my 'Discourses,' and really I am not able to detect any difference between us, save that he draws his argument from the terms of the "covenant," as a positive institution, while I arrive at precisely the same results from a view of the relation itself, between parents and churches on one side, and children on the other; that relation being considered as a vehicle of God, and thus a power. Dr. Hopkins takes the exterior view, regarding the result as resting in a positive appointment of God. I have produced the interior view, that of inherent connection and causation. But every theologian who has got beyond his alphabet, will see, at a glance, that both views are only different forms of one and the same truth, having each its own peculiar uses and advantages. Indeed, I will suggest to your committee that you compound your difficulty with the panic-mongers, by publishing, in the same volume with the 'Discourses,' this whole treatise of Dr. Hopkins; so that when they are frightened by the heresies of one, they may turn over, and fortify their orthodoxy by the other.

Dr. Witherspoon, a contemporary of Dr. Hopkins, held opinions on this subject that were in a high degree coincident, though presented in a more popular and less doctrinal shape. He says:

"I will not enlarge on some refined remarks of persons as distinguished for learning as piety, some of whom have supposed that th[e] [children] are capable of receiving impressions of desire and aversion and even of moral temper, particularly of love or hatred, in the fi[rst] year of their lives. * * When the gospel comes to a peo[ple] that have long sitten in darkness, there may be numerous converts all ages; but when the gospel has long been preached, in plenty a[nd] purity, and ordinances regularly administered, few but those who a[re] called in early life are called at all. A very judicious and pious writ[er] Richard Baxter, is of opinion that in a regular state of the church, a[nd] a tolerable measure of faithfulness and purity in its officers, fami[ly] instruction and government *are the usual means of conversion, pub[lic] ordinances of edification.* This seems agreeable to the language o[f] Scripture; for we are told that God hath set in the church apostl[es] prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, (not for converting sinne[rs] but) for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for t[he] edifying of the body of Christ."—*Witherspoon*, vol. ii. pp. 395, 397.

We descend now to Dr. Stephen West, of Stockbridg[e] who wrote a generation, or half generation, later than D[r.] Hopkins. Many persons, yet living, remember the contro[-] versy carried on between him and Rev. Cyprian Strong of Chatham, in reference to this subject: a controversy managed, on the part of Dr. West, with a degree of abilit[y] worthy of his high reputation as a man of talent. He handles his argument, from the covenant, in a differen[t] manner from Dr. Hopkins, but comes to the same result. He says, in his reply to Mr. Strong, a pamphlet that will be found in the collection of the Connecticut Historical Society, that—

"As the fate of the offspring was suspended, by divine constitution on the conduct of the parent, it would be no more than analogous to suppose that provision is made, in the covenant of grace, for parents to be *instrumental in transmitting* and securing its blessings."—p. 66.

"But respecting this covenant, it is to be observed, that it is to *believers* that the proposals of it are made—to those whose hearts are, in a good measure, prepared for every duty. Nor is that grace, which is necessary to such parental faithfulness as God will bless to the conversion and salvation of children, *an unattainable thing*."—p. 74.

It is unnecessary to burden my pamphlet with extended quotations. He answers the objection, which my little book has provoked, that "children will not consider their salvation depending on their personal exercises,"—dwells on

"the susceptibility of children to impressions," while under "the control" of their parents, and before their own will is developed—finds, in his doctrine "a broad basis for infant baptism," which on any other theory is absurd and insignificant, and therefore certain to fall into practical disuse—shows how it will stimulate every parent to duty, and encourage him in it—what a "spring" is one day to be given to the cause of God and spiritual religion, by means of it—regrets the "unpopular part" he has been obliged to take—and finally, if my censors will suffer it, accounts for the reluctance of men to admit his doctrine, on the ground that "a sense of obligation sits uneasy on the human mind,"—that there is a "latent desire in parents to exculpate themselves," and "a natural opposition in the human heart to a doctrine which" takes away so completely "the excuses" of neglect and unbelief.

One passage only I cannot withold, and I commend it to the special attention of some, that they may look, for once, on the bearing of a true Christian scholar; that they may see how the fathers of a manlier time, dared to hope for some progress in Christian truth, and judge whether I am most in fault, who have endeavored, as I could, to fulfill the hope of this revered teacher, and discharge the legacy he has left us; or they who, having lost both the doctrine he held, and the spirit of courage in which he held it, turn pale at the possibility that something variant or new may come. Regretting that the subject discussed had before been so "sparingly handled and superficially treated," he adds:

"Though, through the natural blindness of the human heart, the progress in divine things is slow and gradual, it is to be hoped that what is here offered to public view may excite a more general sense of the importance of the subject, and a more careful and strict attention to it. Should this be the effect, it is presumed that FURTHER LIGHT WILL STILL APPEAR."—p. 103.

Nobly said! and possibly the hope expressed, if we can suffer it, will somehow be fulfilled. I am permitted to add,

that my venerable friend, Dr. Robbins, who was a pupil o Dr. West, distinctly remembers that a circle of ministe was gathered to hear his pamphlet read before publicatio and most of them, he informs me, coincided with it, but D Edwards (the younger) was opposed; and it was remarke that when the part was read which showed the inhere connection between the doctrine vindicated and infant ba tism, and the insignificance of the rite on any other groun Dr. Edwards observed an ominous and profound silenc making no reply. Dr. Strong, also, of Hartford, he remem bers to have said, while this controversy was in progres "Dr. West is right; his doctrine will ultimately prevail but in the present state of the church it can hardly becom a practical principle."

Dr. Dwight, in his two sermons on "religious education, letting go, for the present, the covenant as a positive inst tution, passes directly to the import and inherent power o the parental relation itself, as constituted by God; an taking the same stand-point that I have taken, advances train of sentiments nearly identical with the sentiment held in my 'Discourses.' Speaking of the peculiar duc tility of childhood, he says:

"The conscience is, at this period, exceedingly tender and suscep tible, readily alarmed by the apprehension of guilt, and prepared t contend or fly, at the approach of a known temptation. All the affec tions also are easily moved, and fitted to retain permanently and ofte indelibly whatever impressions are made. The heart is soft, gentle and easily won, strongly attached by kindness, peculiarly to the pa rents themselves. To every amiable, every good thing it is drawn comparatively, *without trouble or resistance, and united by bonds whic no future art or force can dissolve. Against every odious and bad thing its opposition is with equal ease excited and rendered permanent.*"— *Dwight's Theology*, vol. v. p. 131.

He insists also on the necessity of suiting the matter of religious instruction to the age and capacity of the child, not only excluding, as I have ventured to do, philosophic and theologic forms of doctrine, but even declaring that

"such parts only of the Scriptures should be taught at any time, as may be made distinctly intelligible." He deprecates also the exceedingly baleful effect of such teachings and modes of treatment as make the subject of religion "odious," or present it "in a gloomy or discouraging light."

"In this mode of instruction, children are kept at a distance from religion, by a regular repulsion, and scarcely approach so near as to learn its real nature. Even truth itself will, to them, be odious truth. Religion will be dreaded before it is known. That which is taught, the child will neither love, respect, nor remember, and the teacher's own example of its influence, will complete the alienation his precepts began."—p. 138.

There are manifestly some very "dangerous tendencies" in sentiments like these. And when he comes to propound his doctrine of results, showing how it is given to every Christian parent to form his children almost without fail to God, the laxity of his opinions becomes decidedly alarming. Under the text—Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it—he first dissents from the inference taken by some, that "in every instance a child, thus educated, will persevere in the way he should go," maintaining, instead, the opinion—

"That God intended this promise as a direct encouragement to parents who should be faithful, in such a degree, as we sometimes see exercised, in the education of children. The amount of the promise is, that their children will *generally*, when trained up in the way they should go, not depart from it."—pp. 140, 141.

Varying his language, he says again, yet more definitely—

"If we train up children in the way they should go, they will enter it *almost of course*, follow us to heaven, and be our companions for ever."—p. 145.

To substantiate this opinion, he goes into a careful examination of the objection, derived from the apparent failures of good men in training their children, partly denying the supposed facts, partly explaining them away, and, for the rest, resolving them into the neglects and wrongs of the parents themselves.

I am not aware that this particular subject has been ful and formally discussed, by any writer of repute, since t days of Dr. Dwight. But it would be easy to cite, from hundred sources, single paragraphs that carry the sam opinion, and would, if formally developed, expand thei selves into a view systematically correspondent. Thu my predecessor, the lamented Wilcox, in a beautiful se mon on the "Influence of Education," says:

"Must early instruction and habit go for nothing in Christianit Though men are never made Christians in heart, merely by a cou of early instruction and discipline, independently of the special infl ences of the Holy Spirit, are they not frequently made so by a cou in connection with such influences? And would they not uniform be, if the instruction and discipline, in question, were not more or l neglected? Is there not fullness and firmness enough in the promi of God to furnish ground for such an opinion? Can any thing plainer than the language, 'Train up a child in the way he should and when he is old he will not depart from it?' Has not God promis to bless the means of grace, when they are faithfully used? Has not, by a particular covenant, given such a promise to faithful paren in relation to their children? May they not plead that covenant, a when they are unsuccessful in their plea, is it not because they ha broken their part of this covenant by not performing their whi duty?"—*Wilcox's Remains*, p. 303.

In the theology of Knapp, a text-book translated by D Woods, Jr., and in general repute among us for candor a orthodoxy, the author discusses very cautiously the "us and effects of infant baptism," and comes to the followin as one of his conclusions:

"In the general position that just *as far as* they [baptized childre have subjective capacity, and as soon as they have this, God will wo in them that which is good for their salvation, there is not only nothi unreasonable, but it is altogether rational and scriptural. It is al certain that we cannot surely tell how soon, or in what way, and what means, this subjective capacity may be shown and developed —Vol. ii. p. 538.

Dr. Woods, of Andover, is characteristically cautio on this subject; but when he says that the "religious cha acter" of men is "commonly derived" from their paren it is difficult to see wherein he differs from what I ha asserted concerning the organic power of the parental offic

save that he has employed language less precise and determinate. Religious character has two forms, bad and good: that of sin and that of faith. And if this is "commonly derived from parents," not from the world without, or the church without, (save as the church acts through the family,) what is this but the very heresy I have asserted? only it is advanced in a way so loose and general, that few will notice the real import of the language. He says:

"From the beginning of the world, the character and condition of children have generally resulted from the conduct of parents. The peculiar character of a tribe or nation has commonly been derived from the character of its father or head. This extends to the *religious* as well as the social and secular character. The history of the Christian church shows that after it has been once established in any place, it has depended for its continuance and increase, chiefly upon the success of parents in promoting the piety of their children."—*Infant Baptism*, p. 30.

Once more, and the latest of all, Dr. White, Professor of Theology in the Theological Seminary of New York, delivered, less than a year since, before the synod of New York and New Jersey, and at their request, a discourse on the Abrahamic covenant, in which he takes the same ground precisely with Drs. Hopkins and West, viz: that when the covenant engages "I will be a God to thee and thy seed after thee," the promise is equally spiritual in both the members. "To be the God of the *seed* of Abraham signifies as much as to be the God of *Abraham*. The promise is spiritual, and its blessings eternal." Then carrying out his doctrine to its legitimate results, he says:

"It is the duty of Christian parents to train up their children strictly in the ways of virtue; to restrain them from all courses of immorality and sinful and dangerous pleasure, and to cause them to conform their lives to *all the requirements of the Gospel*. Do any say, this is too hard a requirement: they cannot do it? We can only answer them here by saying, it is their duty. God will strictly require it of them, and will admit of no apology to justify or extenuate their failures."—*National Preacher*, vol. xx. p. 243 and 253.

Here now, lest I should overburden your patience, I suspend the citation of witnesses. And does any one ask for

what purpose I have accumulated such a roll of authoritie
Is it that I propose to limit myself by their opinions,
shelter myself under their names? Neither. I submit
no human limitation; I ask no human shelter. Is it tha
propose to silence my censors by these authorities? N
for they are as much at liberty as I am to dissent from
doctrines and opinions cited. What then? It is done
answer, that I may bring my critics into a fair dilemm
and require it of them—either to confess their ignoran
and such a measure of it as amounts to a theologic
qualification, or else to stand convicted of knowingly rais
a panic against the best and most respected names, no
our own churches only, but in the world. Possibly th
distinguished men were all in a mistake, and possibly I
in the same. That was a fair subject of discussion.
these censors of orthodoxy have done more: they h
raised an outcry, they have instigated a fright, driving
thus to the very extreme measure of silencing a book
in which it turns out that they have been stirring up th
fire against Baxter and the first fathers of New Engla
against Hopkins, West, Dwight, and I know not how m
others; to say nothing of the Ancient Church itself,
understood by the most competent critics! For there
scarcely a point in my tract, which these high authori
are not seen to have asserted, or an objection by the
selves, which they are not seen to have refuted. I
made clear, also, to yourselves as a committee, and I sho
think to the public beside, that you did not err when
came to the deliberate conclusion that there was no s
breach on received opinions, in my tract, as ought
disturb the peace of the churches. What right had
to judge that you should set on fire the course of natu
by publishing sentiments accepted in the first age,
maintained by the best men in the church? And
what opinion will you have, what opinion will all sens

men have, two years hence, of this dismal scene of fatuity, which in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven, has so infected the nerves of orthodox Massachusetts as even to stop the press of their Sabbath-School Society?

So much for the past. I will now endeavor to show you more briefly the relations of my view of Christian nurture to present opinion. I expressed confidence, in the 'Advertisement,' that the view presented is "inconsistent with no scheme of doctrine generally held or accepted." I did not mean, of course, that I believed every and all such schemes myself, or that I had not written according to the scheme I do believe. I only meant that what may seem to be peculiar, in the view given: that the child is to be trained, not for conversion at some advanced age, but as expected to "*grow up a Christian:*" that God offers a grace to make it possible, and justifies a presumption that the result may actually be realized; this, I meant to say, is a view not inconsistent with any scheme I know, whether of depravity, regeneration, spiritual influence, or election. No matter whether depravity is inborn damnable sin, or whether as guilty the guilt is only the demerit of our own exercises; no matter whether we begin to sin before birth, with the first breath, or only after years have passed away; no matter whether our sin come by imputation, or blood, or social contagion: take what scheme you will, of this or any of the other doctrines named, and my view of Christian nurture, as above stated, may be easily set in connection with it, and adapted into it as a component member. This I meant to say, and this I now repeat. Doubtless it will fit more awkwardly in some than in others, and make a clumsier figure; for probably some of the schemes are clumsier than others, and more difficult to marry with what is reasonable and scriptural. Still, there is not any scheme or school of doctrine current among us, unless it

be a real and practical antinomiamism, which will not s
fer, without any substantial infringement, the view of Ch
tian nurture which I have advanced.

This I affirm, not without having made the experim
but it would require too much space to verify the as
tion universally. I will only show how it holds in a sin
example. Take the doctrine (which I frankly say I
not hold) that regeneration is accomplished by an inst
and physical act of God, to which act truth and all ende
ors in the subject have no other relation, as means to e
than the ram's horns had to the fall of Jericho. Yet
instant, isolated act of Omnipotence may fall on the h
of infancy, as well as of adult years, and God may
us reason to expect it. Nay, it is this very scheme, wh
professes that God sometimes regenerates men when t
are asleep! Wherein is it incredible, therefore, that
should regenerate infancy before it is awake? This
was the very scheme of regeneration held by Dr. Hopk
who also maintained, as we have seen, that parents
as "really and effectually transmit holiness as existe
to their children." And who of these defenders of
faith will rise up to show that Dr. Hopkins was a man
did not know the logical connections of his own opinio

But I did not draw up this scheme of nurture to n
the uses, or gratify the opinions of any sect. It is a
maxim with me, as I think it should be, in this age
every one who pretends to think at all, to reach after
most comprehensive forms of truth possible; to see
far I may dissolve into unity, in the views I present,
conflicting opinions by which men are divided, giving t
back all which they are after, in a form which they
accept together. And the fortune of my little book is
this view, remarkable, though not a surprise to my
This will appear as I glance at the relations of my doct
to the religious posture of some of the principal denom
tions of Christians. I begin with—

THE BAPTISTS.—I did not suppose that what I had advanced would be acceptable, at first, to them, and they have spoken of my tract as only they could, retaining their position; save that they have been a little more violent and contemptuous, in one or two instances, than was necessary. At the same time, I have heard of more than one minister of that denomination candidly allowing that my doctrine of organic character, as opposed to the rigid individualism of the times, was a view of the subject which had greatly affected his mind. There certainly is little reason to wonder that the Baptists should reject infant baptism, when we hold it ourselves only as a dead tradition, separated from any rational meaning or use. And if we stand upon the footing of absolute individualism, it follows irresistibly, as any child may see, that they are right in requiring evidence of actual faith previous to baptism. I have shown them how they may accommodate all their rational scruples, and yet accept this rite. And perhaps it may not be indelicate to allude to my own mental experience. At the time of my settlement in the ministry, the council came near rejecting me, because I could say nothing more positive concerning infant baptism. After two or three years of reflection, I came upon the discovery that all my views of Christian nurture were radically defective and even false. And now what before was dark or even absurd, immediately became luminous and dignified—a rite the most beautiful and appropriate of all the ordinances of God. And when our Baptist brethren can take up this view of Christian nurture, I think they will discover that, while we have been in as great error as they—perhaps even greater because of our inconsistency—God has yet saved us a rite, which may be as true a comfort and as rich a blessing to themselves as to us.*

* Since the first publication of this article, I have seen a review, of three columns, in the *Zion's Advocate*, a Baptist paper, in which the

Congregationalists.—Inasmuch as the relation of my view of Christian nurture to these is the matter now in

writer accepts my whole view of Christian nurture, only insisting that it has no necessary connection with infant baptism. The notice is written with candor, and is, on the whole, one of the very ablest that has appeared. The Baptist paper of Hartford indicates a similar view of the subject.

The last number of the *Christian Repertory, or Princeton Review*, has a long and elaborate article on the discussion, which is said to be written by a distinguished professor of Princeton Seminary, and which represents, we may suppose, the opinions of—

The Old School Presbyterians.—I expected that the older forms of Calvinism would sympathize more readily with my views of Christian nurture, than the new or new light orthodoxy of the later forms. Of course, I am not the less happy that my expectations are justified. My reviewer goes into a full and deliberate examination of my 'Discourses' and of this 'Argument' advanced in their support. What I had said of an "organic power," is perfectly familiar to him. He maintains the correctness of my doctrine, that the Christian child should be expected to grow up in Christ, and admits the general possibility that such a result may be realized. He accepts what I have advanced concerning the revival system. He is frightened, in short, by nothing I have said, and earnestly dissents from nothing, except that he apprehends an error in my views of spiritual agency, as connected with the subject. In what I have said of the divine agency, as working "in and through the organic laws of the family," as a restorative medicine works through the laws of the body, he thinks I have descended, without knowing it, to mere "naturalism," or, at best, to naked "theism;" or, what is equivalent, to "Pelagianism or Rationalism." I am quite willing to be corrected, in this or any other respect, and the process of construction, by which he comes to his result, is undoubtedly a correct one to him, as it will probably appear to be to others, who hold the same assumptions with him. But a careful analysis of the whole subject will show that he has drawn me into the category of "Pelagianism and Rationalism," by assuming, as a truth, that which is, in fact, the radical sin of both, viz: that what we call nature, as pertaining to humanity, is true and proper nature. Proper nature, as worked by the original laws of humanity, does not, in fact, exist any longer. Un-nature has taken its place. The original laws are still in us, but sin has given them a perverse and diseased action, which we ourselves can no more stop, by any

question, I only notice here the fact that a Congregational paper in Maine, and another in Vermont, both journals in the highest repute for character, have noticed my tract with favor. This too they have done since the attention of the public has been distinctly called to its errors, by the attacks made upon it. And they are moved to this, if I may judge, by their regard, not for novelty, but for an older antiquity; for the practical aim of the 'Discourses' is really in much closer sympathy with the Christian methods of high

action of our will, than we can re-organize the original laws of the soul itself. It requires a power as truly supernatural to do it, as it did to organize the soul at the first. Still, it would be singular, if God, in restoring the broken system of the soul, should spurn all conjunction with the original laws of the soul and of character established by Himself. There is, for instance, a natural law of succession in the thoughts of men. Sin makes it a law of corrupt succession. Will God, then, work out a process of sanctification, wholly independent of this law of thinking, or will he do it in and through this law? So of the "organic power" I have asserted in Christian parents. Sin had made it a corrupting power. God does not spurn it therefore, or abolish it: grace never abolishes nature, but only un-nature. It only sanctifies what sin has desecrated and perverted, restoring it to be a vehicle of life, and requiring it to answer its original design. And, in so doing, it proves itself to be supernatural; not by revealing, as my reviewer supposes, some "higher power" than that which rules in proper nature, but the same power, viz: the power of God; for if God be in the natural, there cannot be a higher than God in the supernatural. There can be no proper antithesis between the natural and the supernatural, except as we hold the natural atheistically. The true antithesis is between the supernatural and the unnatural, i. e. nature as a broken and disordered system; which, of course, nothing but a divine power can mend. And this it will assuredly do, by a conjunction with, and a re-constructive agency operating in and through nature. If my reviewer will take these suggestions, I think he will acquit me of the error into which he is so confident I have fallen.

He says, I observe, that I "disclaim all belief in instantaneous conversion." If he will read again the passage quoted—not half of it torn from the other half, but the whole—he will see that he has inadvertently done me great injustice. I only deny that men are converted by a blow.

Calvanism, in days gone by, than it is with the desultory and dry individualism of our new light orthodoxy.

Episcopalians.—How the view of Christian nurture which I have presented differs from the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as held in the Episcopal church, is sufficiently explained on pages 36 and 37 of the 'Discourses. Probably it is not difficult to use the language of the prayer book, as meaning only what I have asserted to be the true idea of baptism as connected with regeneration. And many, I presume, do use it only in this or in a similar meaning; regarding the rite as signifying a presumptive regeneration, and nothing more. Whether this can be done so as to justify the historic meaning of the language is more doubtful; for it is a fact known to all that the rite of baptism had been regarded in former ages as having a peculiar sacramental or magical power, and was understood to convey a grace immediately to the subject, washing away his sins, and setting him in a regenerate state; and the language of the prayer-book I suppose represents this opinion. Still it is an undoubted truth, in our view of the subject, that baptism, being a rite of God, as the church is a school or temple of God, and altogether a form or body for the inhabitation of the Spirit, the rite must, in some sense and degree, be a vehicle of grace; just as all other forms are vehicles. And since it was originally set in the church, as a type of regeneration, it is so to be held and applied.

Soon after my tract was published, it was carefully and very candidly noticed in the Episcopal paper of this city, and with, at least, qualified favor. The writer was particularly gratified by the recognition made of an organic power, and the opposition avowed to that extreme individualism so prevalent in our notions of piety. He considered this an indirect compliment to the style of opinion held in his own church, and was a little disposed to complain that while I had drawn facts to illustrate my doctrine from

many other and distant sources, I had made no reference to the Episcopal church, always close at hand. To excuse any such appearance of prejudice, I ought perhaps to say that I had not been able, by observation, to convince myself that the children educated in the Episcopal churches turn out better, as regards moral and Christian character, than our own. Indeed, I had this fact, real or supposed, before me to resist my theory. And I accounted for the fact, by observing that, while Episcopacy is right in avoiding our extreme individualism, it does so by absorbing the family in a boundless, unsparing churchism. Now, it is the family pre-eminently that God has prepared to be the church of childhood. Here is located the true organic power, that which, under God, is to fashion the child to a Christian life. He must grow up as an olive plant at the table, and drink in, through the spirit of the house, the spirit of piety. It is not enough therefore to avoid individualism, unless we accept instead the organic power, which God has set in most intimate and proper connection with childhood.

German Reformed.—We have here another phase of religious opinion and of Christian organization. To look at ourselves, from this yet more foreign point of view, will instruct us; but this I shall do, more at large, in another connection. I only acknowledge here an able review of my 'Discourses,' continued through four numbers of a weekly journal, in which my distinction between organic character and individualism is earnestly approved. The real import and importance of the distinction are seized upon, and it is treated, not as a conceit or trick of language, but as a solid and earnest truth, which foretokens, in the writer's opinion, a final remedy of that which is the great defect of Puritanism—in which, however, the author is partially at fault; for it is not so much the defect of Puritanism, as of the new light form of it, introduced only a hundred years ago.

UNITARIANS.—Since my tract was published, it has bee signified to me privately that I have done the Unitarian injustice, in the paragraph (p. 17, 18,) where allusion i made to them. I have been assured that they do not con sider it to be the work of Christian education "to educat or educe the good that is in us." It was not my design t misrepresent them, but it is difficult, in so great diversit of sentiment, to ascertain, with any precision, what ma properly be attributed to them. That there is a suscepti bility to good, in every mind, fallen though it be, is to m beyond a reasonable question. The soul has that withi it, which may be appealed to by what is right and holy It can feel the beauty of truth, only not as when practicall embraced. God is to it a lovely being, lovely in all th points of his character and government, only not loved The mind also has ideals revealed in itself that are ever celestial; and it is the strongest of all proofs of its depravity that, when it would struggle up towards its own ideals, i cannot reach them; cannot, as apart from God, even lif itself towards them. Now, this capacity or susceptibility to good, I have supposed the Unitarians to consider as good in itself; that is, morally good, deserving, or meritorious. That I have often seen language of this kind I am certain. I dissent from it, as I would from the inference that one is a friend of truth, because he has a perceptive power for the truth. There is not and really can be no proper goodness in a soul, till it practically embraces, as its final end and law, and thus becomes united to *the right*, or, what is the same, to *God and the principles of God*. Previously to this, the power we have to feel the right and be attracted by the good is only the more conclusive proof of depravity, inasmuch as we are found to reject what we mentally approve, and to mortify the noblest wants of our being. And the moment we withdraw our mind, in such a case, *from* the simple attitude of contemplation, to reflect upon

our own guilty unlikeness to God, or remind ourselves of laws and constraints which we still design to violate, then also will be discovered the possibility of hating what we feel to be lovely, and, in fact, that no enmity is so truly bitter, as that which wrong feels towards the desecrated goodness of its object.

I observe that a certain school, at least, of Unitarians have somewhat warmly espoused my little book since its publication was suspended, and this, I perceive, is to many a note of apalling import against me; for nothing surely can be less than a pestilent error which any Unitarian will approve! Indeed, there are some such, whether in your committee or not I cannot say, who would probably renounce their own faith at once, if they saw a Unitarian even so much as meditating an assent to it. If you suffer at all this kind of infirmity, would it not be well to employ a Unitarian committee, who may pass upon the manuscripts you have before you, and then what they approve you will certainly know that you ought to reject!

Meantime, I can only say, for myself, that it gives me unfeigned pleasure to find myself approved by the Unitarians, and I hope they may be able to approve, in like manner, every sentiment I may hereafter publish. Indeed, I sincerely rejoice that their approbation was signified before my tract was suspended, wherein it is shown, beyond dispute, that they approve it for the *sentiments*, and no one can say that they do it from any antagonistic or party motive. And since my nerves are equal to it, I will go farther, and confess that I had a secret hope beforehand of carrying the assent of the Unitarians; that, in drawing out my view of depravity as connected with organic character, and also in speaking of what I supposed to be their theory of education, I did seek to present the truth in such a way that all their objections might be obviated. I know not that any of their own writers have presented views that are similar.

If they have, then I accept them. If they have not, I certainly shall not renounce the truth, if I have been so happy, after a quarter of a century of debate and quarrel as finally to present a view of it, in which they are able to rest; much less when high Calvinism is able to rest in it too, in company with evangelic Episcopacy, and I know not how many of the Christian families beside. Indeed, it is my felicity that while your committee are deploring probably the stigma suffered in publishing a book that Unitarians can accept, I am congratulating myself in the fact that I have been able to present a great practical subject, involving so many difficult and contested points in theology, in a manner so comprehensive, as to carry, at least, the qualified assent of many Christian denominations. I should even be false to my own aims and principles not to hail the result with unfeigned joy. Neither let the public be too easily frightened by the success of a catholic effort. And if the bats and beetles, scared by so strange a sign, begin to flutter wildly, as if the elemental darkness they inhabit were in danger, it is not best to be alarmed on that account; for it is not they who rule the world, any more than it is they who understand it.

Such alarm, brethren of the committee, you have suffered with a good deal more of facility, it seems to me, than was necessary. No word of complaint against my tract had you heard, till you heard it from Connecticut. None have you yet heard, probably, save in voices that are only echoes of the alarm from Connecticut. Pardon me now, if I suggest that, representing the ministers and Christians of Massachusets, you really do us much greater honor than we deserve—so great honor, that we are obliged to smile at your expense. That you, a numerous and respectable committee, after having come to a serious and careful decision on my 'Discourses,' a decision matured by six months of deliberation, should have turned pale, and recanted at *the first note* of disapprobation from Connecticut, is, to say

the least, more than we could have expected. We are even amazed at the spell we have wrought on your judgments, and can hardly believe what we have done ourselves.*

* * * * * * * * *

But what is to be done, it may be asked, with the more specific charges against my tract; for as yet they are not answered? It would be somewhat strange, I reply, after the historical view just given, if I did not indulge a degree of confidence that I have my adversaries already in my power. Pardon me if I have not been able as yet to bring myself thoroughly into the defensive mood in this article, and especially as I seem to have a work on hand that is more positive and significant than self-vindication. Besides, there are reasons in the *matter* of these attacks, that discourage any attempt to offer a formal answer.

First of all, they depend, for the most part, as regards any show of argument, on a certain theory of depravity and regeneration that was debated, to the complete satisfaction of the public, some fifteen years ago, and, as I believe, for ever exploded. According to this theory, the human race hate God instinctively, and must hate him the more, the more clearly his character is seen, until after a certain divine stroke or *ictus* reverses the instinct, when love results as hatred did before. Many whom I really respect still linger under this ictic theory, and if they choose to discuss it and reason from it, I have no ob ection. But for me to go back, and wade through this worn-out question, to vindicate myself against objections from a doctrine as distant from me as the supremacy of the Pope, and shortly to be as distant from the world—really it is more than I can undertake. Let it suffice that Dr. Hopkins, who held substantially this same theory, was able to connect it with the same scheme of nurture which I have advanced. If my

* A paragraph is here omitted, which, having answered its purpose, it did not seem desirable to continue in the stereotype form.

adversaries will do the same, I am content to suffer wh judgment they please to inflict. Meantime, the excelle man whom I have brought under sentence as a "Pharisee because he was not regenerated according to the ictic theor who did not hate sufficiently, and loved God without a pr liminary contest, being quite surprised by his glory—he to doubtless, though he cannot pass the theologic censors belo will be able to hold some confidence still that he may pa the more discriminative, as well as milder tribune above

In the next place, the most effective points that are ma against my 'Discourses,' are made so, only by the misrepr sentations of the critics themselves, and these misrepresen ations are so interwoven with all their arguments agai me, that I am discouraged from any attempt to answer then for I see beforehand, that the same treatment, practic against my answer, will turn that also into the same co fusion; and since I have no hope of being permitted to sta before the public in my own opinions, unless I go on to r claim and re-assert what is taken from me till misrepresen ation is out of breath, I may as well submit first as las Manifestly there could be no end but exhaustion to an arg ment thus conducted. That I have reason for such a dete mination, you will see from two or three examples.

And first, I invite you to take my tract, and see wheth I condense without distortion, the passage found on page 8–10, so that, having the whole before us, we may judg what it means.

"You say that you have tried to realize the very schem of Christian nurture I am proposing, how then can it b true, when your children seem intractable to religion, an *sometimes* display an aversion to the subject?" I answe distinctly in the four considerations that follow:

1. Your children *may have* seeds of holy principle i them which you do not discover, just as probably adult *sometimes* do.

2. The church of God, whose office it is to co-operate and bear a part of the responsibility with you, may not have done it, but may have actually hindered your success.

3. You may not have been as faithful as you suppose, or as healthful in your example.

4. You must not assume that our style of piety, in this age, is such as will allow us to realize the best results.

Looking over, now, this passage thus condensed, but not more clearly stated than it is in the 'Discourses,' ask yourselves whether it teaches that Christian parents are to take it for granted that their children are pious? Next see how it is made to convey this lesson.

The critic comes and sticks on a preface thus: "There are many parents who are eminently pious, and whose piety shines in nothing more conspicuously than in the education of their children. But they see no evidence, &c. * * To such you say."

To *such* I did not say. I was addressing only Christians of ordinary fidelity, and such, in fact, as I actually and expressly conjectured may have failed of success by their own delinquencies; and every reader will see that my censor has begun by fabricating for himself and the public a new aim or purpose, by which the whole import of my words is changed. A case is thus made out for me, in which I am compelled by my own principles to believe that there must be some real success, even despite of contrary evidence; whereas it will be clear to the reader that I am supposing not actual success only, but quite as much, actual want of success, and the latter for sufficient reasons. If I had written my name on a sheet of paper, and this critic had then written a note of hand over it, he would not have committed a worse violation of my rights, and the rights of the public, than he has done by this little preface. But the preface is added, and the public mind is thus prepared to see it made out that Christians are authorized, of

necessity, to presume on the spiritual renovation of their children, without any, or even against the most decisive contrary evidence. But there comes a difficulty. Nos. 2, 3, and 4, suggest other solutions of the question or objection proposed by the parents, viz: that there may be no place for such a presumption, and that some fault of theirs, or of the church, or the mis-shapen piety of the age will account for it. What now shall be done with these three suggestions? If the proposed extravaganee is to be fixed upon me, there is evidently no other way of success but to cast out these, and make nothing of them! But we come back to No. 1, and here is a difficulty. The language is potential, ("*may have*,") it only declares a *possibility*. But harder things are already surmounted than the changing of a possibility into a positive affirmation! and nothing now remains for my censors but to ask—"Are Christian parents to presume that their children *are* pious, when they give not the least evidence of the fact, when they manifest aversion to the subject of religion itself?" And a few pages further on, he draws out of much the same material, a like conclusion, to be taken by the child; and, that I may see the absurdity of my doctrine, allows me to hear myself addressing the child in a sermon of encouragement thus: "If your parents are truly pious and faithful, you have a right to presume that you have been born again, although neither you nor your parents can as yet discern any evidences of a renewed heart"! A very serious account has any man to meet, who wrongs the public by throwing thus into confusion salutary and healthful doctrine, and practices on the fears of the timorous, by warning them of poisons he has himself injected.

Take a second example of misrepresentation. I had referred to the Germans, giving them credit for a degree of "religious feeling" and a savor of "Christian piety" exceeding, perhaps, what the truth will justify. I know

them only by report, and some of my friends assure me that I have judged them too favorably. And yet I see not how they can make sure of it; for I made their religious character "remarkable" only as contrasted with the "looseness" and the "pernicious error" prevalent in their "pulpits," so that if the error be very great and very pernicious, as I certainly thought it to be, then it would be remarkable—which was the very thought I had—if there were *any piety* left among them. I cited their case, accordingly, to show what power there is in a scheme of education, even partially right, when all other means are adverse. Then passing on, I alluded to a declaration I had often seen in literary disquisitions on the Germans, that "they are a people religious by nature." This I contradicted thus: "*Whereas* the strong religious bent they manifest is due to the fact that they are under a form of treatment that expects them to be religious, and are not discouraged by the demand of an experience above their years." And now, after publishing these very words, our Professor goes directly on to read me a sanctimonious lecture, on saying that the Germans are *religious by nature*. "And suppose they are religious by nature," &c.!—holding me up to the public as actually asserting, what I was only denying or resolving into other causes!

As a third example of unpardonable misconstruction, take the following. I had spoken of discovering, in the relation of parent and child, "*something like* a law of organic connection, *as regards character*, between them"—"*perhaps such a connection as induces the conviction that* the character of one is included in that of the other, as a seed is formed in the capsule," &c. These forms of expression are referred to, and then the critic says, disregarding the words in italics—"I would seriously ask, whether those who are children of God are not [on this supposition] '*born of blood?*'" As if I had been speaking here only of

a vascular connection! Now, if it were the method of accomplished theologians to hold up propositions to the ear and try them by the sound, and then, if they do not sound orthodox, to lay an argument against them, I should suspect that I had fallen under some such test here. What had I said about this "organic connection?" Obviously it was something predicable of a time "after birth," when the "physical separation" was complete, and the vascular connection terminated, (*vide* Discourses, p. 21–25.) Follow my words through these pages, with only ordinary attention, and you will perceive that I set up the term "*organic*," to contrast in idea with "*individual*;" both as theologic or metaphysical terms, not as physical. Two modes of being are thus distinguished. Some would call them perhaps the *passive* and the *active*, though with less exactness. For just as a seed grows and has its life in the parent stem, then, as it matures and ripens, *separates* imperceptibly, to be a complete form of life in itself, so the child is at first acted in by the parental will, and cast in the molds of parental feeling and character; until finally, his will being developed, he becomes a complete cause in himself, "acts from himself," as the theologians say, and is a proper individual—the agent of his own character, and thus a subject of blame or praise. But this change takes place gradually, the parent stem being less and less efficient in the seed, till finally it falls off to be a seed by itself. I take now the actings of the parent in the child, both before and after birth; for as far as the child's will or individuality are concerned, they are included in the same category of passivity, and cover them both by the same term calling them "*organic*."

Considering next this organic power as inhabited by Christ and the Spirit of God, and exalted thus into a spiritual state above itself, I take my stand at the birth point *of the* will, (not of the body,) and there I say that the

Christian child ought to emerge into *individuality*, not as ripened into sin and set off in it, but as one that is regenerated, quickened unto spiritual life. In other words, it is the privilege of the Christian, not that he is doomed to give birth to a tainted life and cease, but that by the grace of God, dwelling in him and in the child, fashioning his own character as an organic mold for the child, and the child to a plastic conformity with the mold provided, he may set forth the child into life as a *seed after him*—one that is prepared unto a godly life by causes prior to his own will; that is, by causes metaphysically organic. Thus every thing previous to the will falls into one and the same category. No matter whether it come through vascular connection, or parental handling and control, it comes to the child, I said, "just as naturally and by a law as truly organic" (i. e. just as truly from without his own will) "as when the sap of a trunk flows into a limb." At some time, sooner or later, but only by a gradual transition, he comes into his own will, which, theologically speaking, is the time of his birth as a moral subject of God's government; and if he takes up life as a corrupted subject, so he may and ought also to take it up as a renewed subject—that is, to *grow up as a Christian*. Now, instead of pausing to inquire whether, dissolving thus all the doctrines of depravity held by all the sects, and drawing out another form of doctrine, I had not succeeded in saving what makes each venerable opinion true to itself, and removing the objections of those who object, generalizing too the doctrines both of grace and depravity, so as to bring them into the same organic laws, and present to Christian nurture the true idea, that which makes it Christian—instead of this, it is "seriously" asked whether I do not teach that children brought up in Christ are born of blood!

Now, I do not say that these misrepresentations are wickedly designed. I cannot properly say that they ori-

ginate in inexplicable dullness. Let the public account for them as they can. To go into a formal controversy where I shall have so much work upon my hands that is not argument, I must respectfully decline. And happily for me, I may turn to a critic of another cast, whose objections even are a refreshment, because they are intelligent.

In four successive numbers of the *Weekly Messenger*, a paper of the German Reformed church, published in Chambersburg, Pa., I find a long and careful review of my 'Discourses,' occupying, in all, eight or ten columns of the paper. The articles, signed J. W. N., are said to be from the pen of Dr. Nevin. And now, since he has set forth an objection to my view in the tract, which my other censors would like probably to have advanced themselves, it will be more satisfactory I presume to the public, if, turning to the objection he has alleged, I show in what manner it fails to hold as against me.

This writer enters fully into the distinction I have drawn between *organic* and *individual* agency in religion. He sees the vast import of the distinction, and sees, withal, how it proposes a remedy for that which is the real and sad infirmity of our present style of religion. Obviously the distinction itself, in this shape or some other, is familiar to him. "The whole constitution of the world," he says, "contradicts the unit or atom theory of religion. Humanity is not an aggregate, but an organic whole, manifold and one at the same time. The whole man, soul and body, exists in organic union with his race." This for the natural constitution of things. He describes also the "atomic theory of religion," or what I have here called the "ictic theory," as an attempt to realize the supernatural, in which—

"It is assumed that the new creation holds no continuous historical connection with the order of the world, in its natural form. It is related to this, only in an abrupt, outward way, without coming to *any actual* organic union with it, in the form of life. The supernat-

ural is regarded as something altogether abstract. Grace is a mere influence from the other world, made to reach over to its subject by a sort of divine magic. It becomes identical thus in the end with the idea of religious *experience*. All is subjective; and so the theory runs out practically, at last into a system of rank individualism, in which religion comes to be viewed as an *original, independent* concern, in every case, between man and his Maker."

The development of this precise style of religion he considers, with me, to be the great misfortune of Puritanism as seen in the history of New England. In a word, it has made us all Baptists in theory, which is the same as to say that we ought to be in fact. Thus far he agrees with me.

But in his third article, he most "earnestly dissents" from what he considers to be a dangerous error, into which I have fallen, viz: that, while I seem to admit in words the depravity of the race, and the necessity of a supernatural grace to restore us, I do yet seem effectually to dispense with both; presenting a "theory of educational piety on the constitution of nature, rather than upon the constitution of grace as a strictly supernatural system." In other words, the argument is "rationalistic." In the article which alleges this objection, he feels his way cautiously through my language, and rather *seems* to find than positively to find the truth of it. But in the concluding article, in which he shows how a "defective view of the church" has left me on the ground of rationalism, he becomes positive and decided, as to the pertinence of his objection.

It is most unfortunate, if I have left room for this truly serious objection. For so far from holding the possibility of restoration for men within the terms of mere nature, whether, as regards the individual acting for himself, or the parent acting for his child, the incarnation of the Son of God himself is not, as I believe, more truly supernatural than any agency must be, which regenerates a soul. Whether I could assent to all which this reviewer means by "*the church*," and the "*sacramental grace*" of baptism, is doubtful. And when he says of the church—"She

makes us Christians, by the sacrament of holy baptism, which she always held to be of supernatural force for this very purpose," I am still further in doubt. But to the following I most heartily assent; and since it gives so happily the sentiments I hold, on the point in question, I transfer it to my pages:

"Christianity is in one view, as I have said before, the perfection of nature. Its relation to the world is never, as the sect spirit assumes, abrupt, violent, fantastic, or magical. Christ came truly *in the flesh*, and his Church is in the flesh still. But he came, at the same time, as a true real revelation of a higher life in the world; a life that was not in it before; a life that has been in it always since, and according to his own promise will be so always to the end of time. Christianity then, is not the mere constitution of nature, as it stood before, but the fact of a divine, supernatural constitution, *incorporated with the course of nature, by means of the Church*. To question this, is to question the fact of the incarnation itself, and involves the very essence of rationalism. The Church accordingly is the proper object of *faith*, (as in the Creed,) no less than the person of the theanthropic Saviour himself. To resolve it into the laws of our common life, is infidelity in disguise. At the same time, its whole constitution is in harmony with the laws of this life. *It is the supernatural in human natural form*. The higher life of the Church is the life of humanity itself, exalted into its own proper sphere. *The new creation then carries out and completes the sense of the old creation. It is the old organism still, with all its original necessary laws; only lifted into a higher order of existence.* Such as it is, however, its results spring not from the flesh, as such, but from the presence of supernatural power and resources made permanent in the flesh by Jesus Christ; and we might as well pretend to reduce the miracles of healing which Christ once wrought, to the general category of animal magnetism, as undertake to resolve the objective grace of the Church into the action of laws that begin and end with the constitution of our human nature in its common form."

Admirably said, and true in every syllable! unless when he says "incorporated by *means of the Church;*" though a sense may be found even for that, which puts it beyond objection. But if we take this view, so ably set forth in the extract here given, it follows, of course, that the Christian family and its organic laws are all penetrated by the supernatural element; and as the family is closer about the child, and touches him in points more numerous, and ways more sovereign over character, "the church that is *in the* house" has a great deal more to do with him, in the

first years of his life, than the church universal, or any public sacrament.

If now the question be raised, how my reviewer was led to take up an impression so directly opposite to my real sentiments, it was due perhaps in part to my misfortune, and also in part, I must think, to some defect of attention in him. It was my misfortune that all the language of supernaturalism, I might wish to employ, was already preoccupied by that supernaturalism which he has described, and the "fantastic" impressions connected with the same. In order, therefore, to bring in *spirit* and *redemption* from their isolation, and set them in contact with the organic laws of nature, I was obliged to lean, as decidedly as the truth would suffer, to naturalistic language, and to set my whole subject in a naturalistic attitude.

Thus there are two modes of viewing this whole subject, both equally correct, but not equally apposite to my particular purposes. And the two have about the same relation to each other that the rainbow, as a positive institution, has to the rainbow, as a product of the world's laws. If I take my position by the covenant of Abraham, and hang my doctrine of nurture on that, as a positive institution, or, what is the same, on its promises; if then I contemplate God as coming in by his spirit from a point of isolation above, in answer to prayer, or without, to work in the child's heart, whether by a divine stroke or *ictus* apart from all connection of cause and consequence or not, the change called regeneration, and thus to fulfill the promise; I realize indeed a form of unquestionable supernaturalism, in the mind of those who accept my doctrine, but it is likely to be as far as possible from the reviewer's idea, of "the supernatural in human natural form." For all the words I have used will have settled into a meaning proper only to religious individualism. Now, just as the reality of the rainbow is in the world's laws prior to the covenant with

Noah, so there is, in the organic laws of the race, a reality or ground answering to the covenant with Abraham; only, in this latter case, the reality is a supernatural grace which inhabits the organic laws of nature, and works its results in conformity with them. So every intelligent writer understands. Thus Dr. Woods, on the covenant of Abraham, says, summing up its import: "*It was a system of* RELIGIOUS EDUCATION." That is, the covenant had, or was to have its reality, in the powers incorporated in life—in treatment, example, instruction, government.

If I had handled my subject wholly within the first form, or under the type of the covenant as a positive institution, I presume I should have found a much readier assent, and that for the very reason that I had thrown my grounds of expectation for Christian nurture the other side of the fixed stars, whereby the parent himself is delivered from all connection with the results, and from all responsibility concerning them. He will reverently acknowledge that he has imparted a mold of depravity, but the laws of connection between him and his child are operative, he thinks, only for this bad purpose. If any good comes to the child, it must come straight down from the island occupied by Jehovah, to the child as an individual, and does not, in its coming, take the organic laws of parental character on its way to regenerate and sanctify them as its vehicle. As regards a remedy for individualism, little is gained, even if the doctrine that children ought to be trained up in the way they should go, is believed; for there is no effectual or sufficient remedy, *till the laws of grace are seen to be perfectly coincident with the organic laws of depravity*. Therefore it was necessary to keep to the naturalistic form. But I meant to interpose all the safeguards necessary to save myself from proper naturalism, and I supposed that I had done it. I really think so now. The very first sentence of my *tract is* a declaration of supernaturalism. I find too that, in

as many as thirteen distinct passages, I have used language that has no proper signification at all, unless it carries the idea, either of a supernatural redemption, or of a want that requires it. I refer to four, which ought to satisfy the most distrustful: pp. 18. 25. 26, 7. 47–9.

If I may judge, it was over the first-named passage (p. 18) that my reviewer settled into the unfortunate construction of my tract implied in his objection. After drawing out a view of "natural pravity" communicated under the organic laws of the family, asserted in the Scriptures, and evidenced by the scientific deductions of physiology, it occurred to me that it might be well to throw in a suggestion, that would satisfy a common Unitarian objection, viz: that this subjection to organic mischief is a harsh and therefore incredible arrangement. Therefore I went on to say that "*if* neither Scripture nor physiology taught us the doctrine, or if we were born clear of all damage," still there is back of all a kind of subjective moral necessity that man should make an experiment of sin, in order to become finally established in holiness. Whether this is true, is not now the question. But the reviewer does not notice that this suggestion is added hypothetically, and not to exclude, or at all modify the belief imposed by Scripture and physiology. He then recollects that the disciples of the Hegelian theology in Germany, and Daub in particular, reason in a similar way concerning the necessity of sin, and as they go directly on, representing that there is, in the very struggle of humanity with evil, a law of self-rectification, so that nature will assuredly bring herself out clear at last, he allows himself to believe that I pass to the same result with them; whereas, according to the view I gave, it is not sin only that is wanted and must come as an experiment, but sin as *a bondage, a fall;* for any sin, even but one, involves a fall, that is a subjection to evil; the very thing denied or overlooked by the school alluded to.

And it was with a particular design to exclude the error they hold, that I brought in the words "*fall and bondage under the laws of evil*,"—"*a fall and rescue*,"—"*passed round the corner of fall and redemption*." And what do theologians understand by a *fall* and a *bondage under the laws of evil*, but that evil, once entering a soul, becomes its master; so that it cannot deliver itself: therefore that a *rescue* must come, a *redemption* must be undertaken, by a power transcending nature. My reviewer threw these very words into italics himself, as if he had a question over them, but for some reason he could not allow them to have their only proper significance.

My reviewer entertains a conviction that I have fallen into this error, by not properly observing the distinction "between *principle or ground* and *mere occasion or condition*." And if I rightly understand him, he means to say that the organic laws in which we both agree are only *occasional conditions* under which depravity and spiritual life are developed, and that "back of all" development, there must be a "*principle or germ*" to be developed—an evil germ, and then, from some supernatural source, a good germ. I can hold such a distinction without difficulty, but I see no place for it here; for in this sense of the word *principle*, the soul is itself the principle developed, and the good or evil, separate or mixed, is the development. Or if we go back to the first sin, calling that the *germ* of all evil, still, if we understand ourselves, we shall observe that we use the term with no propriety, save as a mere figure of speech, to denote the reproductive quality of sin, or the certainty that, taken simply as a development, it will be followed by other sins. That first sin, call it a germ or not, is only a development of the soul as a substantive creature, and all the other sins that follow the germ (figurative) are only developments. And my reviewer ought so to understand, when he speaks of a *germ* or *principle*, as that

which contains "the plastic law, that which determines the interior form and type" of the development. Thus, in the body, it is the life principle that contains the plastic law of the fever, and the fever is only that malignant presence by which the vital force is disturbed. In the same manner sin is no germ, save in a figure, and the real germ is the soul itself. So also it is the soul's nature that contains the plastic form or mold, through which the truth and Spirit of God operate a good life; for this is only a good development, and if we speak of a right life afterwards as proceeding from a new germ or seed, as the Scriptures do, it is a figure of speech. Otherwise, or if some new germ must be inserted in the soul from without, my reviewer would fall out of his own doctrine, and take his place side by side virtually with those who hold the ictic theory.

There is no happier term to be employed in this very abstruse and difficult matter, than the old orthodox term "*effectual calling*." The subject, after he has come into union with God, is not the same man with a new germ inserted, but the same man effectually called, i. e. "persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered." And I do not understand that the phrase "*renewing our wills*," used in this connection by the Westminster Assembly, was intended to imply that the subject has any different will inserted, substantively speaking, from what he had before, or that the action of the old will is renewed by any direct interference of power as power. It is only moved persuasively to a new and better consent, and settled therein, by a new and gracious development of the moral affections. In my tract, I represented Christian virtue as a *status* or *state* of being, that is, a *position* or *disposition*, or what is the same, a development of the man, into which being brought, he naturally goes on to develop himself freely in what is right, as before in wrong. Then, if we ask how

this *status* or state was developed, we have occasional causes to speak of and main causes, objective and subjective causes, organic and individual causes, plastic and voluntary causes, intellectual and emotional causes, natural laws acting as natural laws, and natural laws inhabited by supernatural agencies—all concurring and struggling with as great a variety of opposing causes, but resulting, finally, in the given *state* as an effectual calling; but exactly how and by what measures of operation, no human mind, I am sure, can ever fully distinguish. Some things, however, we can say, and especially that the Spirit of God, as a supernatural power, is the necessary cause and spring, without which, concurrent in all, and wielding all, the state in question could never be attained to. Still, the germ thus developed is the soul itself, not some other germ inserted.

And when we come to the case of the child, who I have said ought to *grow up as a Christian*, and not to be trained up for future conversion, I must mean, of course, that there is a dispensation of the Spirit for all ages; one appropriate to the adult, and one appropriate to the rudimental and unreflective age previous to moral action. And here, during the period in which the child is wholly or principally subject to organic laws, the problem is to prepare him to such a *status* or *disposedness*, that he will set off, when he comes to his proper individuality, as a true disciple. This, to the child, is his effectual calling. If I say that the result comes to pass in virtue of the parental character and treatment as an organic power; it is only in the certainty that this character and treatment are themselves products of a supernatural grace, wielded also by a supernatural grace, and attended by the same working in the child or subject. Can it be said that, in maintaining a view like this, I deny, or at all bring into jeopardy any important Christian truth?

I have followed my reviewer into these objections, not

for the purpose of self-vindication—he regards himself rather as favoring than as condemning, in general, the position I have taken, and I accept his objections as cordially as I do his approbation—but I have done it, that I may be able, in the handling of some view intelligently opposed to me, to develop more fully and distinctly my own doctrine. There may still be many who will hesitate to receive all my conclusions, though few, I am quite sure, will any longer suspect my view of Christian nurture as one that involves dangerous error.

At the same time, it will be seen—for I desire to hang out no false colors—that while I was careful in the 'Discourses' to advance nothing of importance, which I knew to be irreconcilable with doctrinal views held by any theologic school among us, I do, in my present article, declare opinions that certainly cannot be reconciled with the views of many, especially those who are maintaining, as ancient, the new light opinions of the last century. I hope my frankness now will gain me a degree of confidence, which I failed to secure by reserve and caution before. Meantime, as it would be far more respectable for the churches, and quite as pleasant to me, that, when an alarm is raised, it should have some intelligent reference to errors advanced, I suggest to those who have been so unfortunate here as to miss their occasion, that now is the time when a panic ought immediately to begin.

It is remarkable that while an Episcopal notice of my unfortunate tract, and another from the German Reformed church, have readily entered into my distinction between the *organic* and the *individual*, in character—showing, I think, that probably it is not absolute nonsense—I have seen no evidence, in any of the printed notices from our own Congregational press, that the distinction has entered, as yet, the mind of a single reader. So glued is our mental habit to the impression that religious character is wholly

the result of choice in the individual; or, if it be generated by a divine *ictus*, preceded, of absolute necessity, by convictions and struggles that are possible only to the reflective age, that we cannot really conceive the meaning, when the possibility is *distinctly stated* that a child should be prepared unto God, by causes prior to his own will. I also represented it to be the prevalent view of Christian nurture, that the child is to be trained up for future conversion, when he is ripe enough in sin to have a conscious battle with it, and this my critics complain of; but they are found, I observe, within less than a page, to set forth in some shape this very opinion, and thus to certify the truth of my representations!

Many persons seem never to have brought their minds down close enough to an infant child to understand that any thing of consequence is going on with it, until after it has come to language, and become a subject thus of *instruction*. As if a child were to learn a language before it is capable of learning any thing! Whereas there is a whole era, so to speak, before language, which may be called the era *of impressions*, and these impressions are the seminal principles, in some sense, of the activity that runs to language, and also of the whole future character. I strongly suspect that more is done, in the age previous to language, to affect the character of children, whether by parents, or, when they are waiting in indolent security, by nurses and attendants, than in all the instruction and discipline of their minority afterwards; for, in this first age, the age of impressions, there goes out in the whole manner of the parent—the look, the voice, the handling—an expression of feeling, and that feeling expressed streams directly into the soul, and reproduces itself there, as by a law of contagion. What man of adult age, who is at all observant of himself, has failed to notice the power that lies *in a simple presence*, even to him? To this power the

infant is passive as wax to the seal. When, therefore, we consider how small a speck, falling into the nucleus of a crystal, may disturb its form; or how even a mote of foreign matter, present in the quickening egg, will suffice to produce a deformity; considering, also, on the other hand, what nice conditions of repose, in one case, and what accurately modulated supplies of heat in the other, are necessary to a perfect product; then only do we begin to imagine what work is going on in the soul of a child during the age of impressions. Suppose now that all preachers of Christ could have their hearers, for whole months, in their own will, after the same manner, so as to move them by a look, a motion, a smile, a frown, and act their own sentiments and emotions over in them; and then, for whole years, had them in authority to command, direct, tell them whither to go, what to learn, what to do, regulate their hours, their books, their pleasures, and their company, and call them to prayer over their own knees every night and morning, who that can rightly conceive such an organic acting of one being in many, will deem it extravagant, or think it a dishonor to the grace of God, to say that a power like this may well be expected to fashion all who come under it to newness of life?

Now, what I have endeavored, in my tract, and what I here endeavor, is to waken, in our churches, a sense of this power, and of the momentous responsibilities that accrue under it. I wish to produce an impression that God has not held us responsible for the effect only of what we do, or teach, or for acts of control and government; but quite as much, for the effect of our *being what we are;* that there is a plastic age in the house, receiving its type, not from our words, but from our *spirit*, one whose character is shaping in the molds of our own. And then, under an impression so salutary, what changes will be wrought in the temperament of our own piety. If a man were to be

set before a mirror, with the feeling that the exact image of what he *is*, for the day, is there to be produced and left as a permanent and fixed image for ever, to what carefulness, what delicate sincerity of spirit would he be moved. And will he be less moved to the same, when that mirror is the soul of his child?

This now is the new element that we want in our religion, and this I earnestly hope may be received. The simple introduction of this, while it destroys nothing valuable in our present form of piety, would suffice to change the style of it in all the points where it is defective; to moisten the dry individualism we suffer, to relieve the eccentricities we display, to set purity in the place of bustle and presumption, growth in the place of conquest, sound health in the place of spasmodic exaltations; for when a conviction is felt in Christian families, that they are to some extent organic unities, where the children are not to grow up as heathens, to be converted afterwards, but in the faith of the parents rather; when living is to be a means of grace, and as God will suffer it, a regenerating power; then will our piety become a domestic spirit, and as much more tender, as it is more inclusive of the family. Now, we have a style of religion that contains, practically speaking, only adults, or those who are old enough to reflect and act for themselves, and it is as if we lived in an *adult world*, where every one is for himself. If we could abolish also distinctions of age, and sex, and office, we should only make up a style of religion somewhat drier and farther off from nature than we now have. We can never come into the true style of living that God has appointed for us, until we regard each generation as hovering over the next, acting itself into the next, and casting thus a type of character in the next, before it comes to act for itself. Then we shall have gentle cares and feelings; *then* the families will become bonds of spiritual life;

example, education and government, being Christian powers, will be regulated by a Christian spirit; the rigidities of religious principle will be softened by the tender affections of nature twining among them, and the common life of the house dignified by the sober and momentous cares of the life to come. And thus Christian piety, being oftener a habit in the soul than a conquest over it, will be as much more respectable and consistent as it is earlier in the birth and closer to nature.

The more I reflect on the particular type of practical religion, prevalent in our churches, for the century now past, the more dissatisfied I am with it. We do not seem to understand that there is a law of population within the church of God, as there is within a nation or an empire—one which, if children were only brought up in the faith, would give a far more rapid increase than we now have, and finally would, by itself, enable the church to overpopulate and occupy the world, as the Saxon race are occupying this western continent. No addition meets our view, which does not come as a conquest.

And revivals of religion, so called, are our scenes of conquest—valued of course according to the hopes rested on their power. Let me not be understood as rejecting *revivals of religion*, though I heartily wish the name were yet to be invented; for it is a source of indefinite mischief. God certainly designs to act on men socially, as well as individually, and to vary the whole exercise of life, in a way to exert the most healthful power over their character. If any one is disturbed or affected with distrust by what I here advance, in connection with this subject, I refer him to an article on the "Spiritual Economy of Revivals of Religion," in the *Christian Spectator* of 1838, where he will find what sentiments I entertain of revivals exhibited more fully. But I was speaking of the great hopes we have rested on revivals, and to this we now return. If

you will attend the General Association of Connecticut, or of Massachusetts, and listen to the reports on the state of religion, you will discover, although it may not be uniformly said, that a year which has brought no revivals of religion is considered to be of course a barren year; the "Spirit of God will be said to be withdrawn," "Zion to languish," "Religion to decay," "the word to be fruitless," and I know not what beside.

Suppose now it be asked, whether a revival can be had all the time? No, that will not be pretended; for the term is used with a special meaning to denote a time of exaltation and victory. It comes then to this, that having made every thing of a revival of religion, and little or nothing of religion itself, we spend the intervening times in mourning over ourselves for languishing when we cannot help it, and in chiding ourselves because we cannot live in the extraordinary as an ordinary thing! Meantime, we virtually take it for granted that God, because he does not help us to realize an impossibility, is withdrawn, and since the revival is gone by, what conclusion have we left, but that "Zion languishes," and that life is to no Christian purpose any longer? There could not be a more unhappy style of practical religion. Nothing stands in a natural attitude, there is no regular pulse of life left, and we only know that we live by the spasms we suffer. Could we believe that the Spirit of God is with us, at all times, in the ordinary as in the extraordinary, in the house too as in the church, and that godly living, in the family, carefully persevered in, will be training up, in a way that is silent and imperceptible, sons and daughters unto God; working results therefore as important as the public scenes in which unbelievers and infidels are subdued to Christ—did we heartily believe that there is something good to be done, some good possibility waiting for us at all times, which is *worth as much*, and in God's view as sacred, as a revival

of religion, how much happier should we be, and quite as much better as happier; for now we discourage ourselves in every thing good, and allow nothing to be properly good, because we have not a revival of religion.

And then, when the revival comes, it comes as a storm, a strange day of power and spiritual commotion, and they that were sighing for the day, are about as full of anxiety lest it run to wildness and extravagance, as they were before to have it come. For a revival of religion may as well be idolized as any other creature of God, a stone or a star, and then, having become an idol, the general truth that superstitious expectation exaggerates all objects, is sure to be verified. If the whole of eternity hangs on religion, and religion is nothing but a revival of religion, there ought assuredly to be some commotion when it comes, as well as great despondency when it goes!

Besides, there is another cause of extravagance. Man is a social creature, so that if we really deny organic power, and dissolve even families into isolated units of free agency—if we hold our religion as a strict exercise of individualism, and never allow it to marry itself to our natural affections and our social instincts, still these social instincts remain within us, and the more they are baffled and kept out of action, the more sure they are to burst over, at last, all barriers, and seize as it were by force the indulgence denied them. Now a revival of religion, whatever we may say or think of it, is a social scene, and the peculiar power exerted in it is social, and in that view organic power. Indeed, it seems to be the design of God in such scenes, as far as they are sober realities, to wield the power of social impulses, as in preaching he wields the power of personal feeling and expression, in behalf of his truth. Accordingly, if all the social instincts have before and ordinarily been baffled as regards their activity, they will now rush in, as animals dying for thirst rush to the water, and having found vent

for once, in religious scenes that move large masses of men, they will burn with such intensity as amounts, if not to phrensy, to a dangerous extravagance. Thus you will observe, in such a scene, that if there be some half solitary beings brought within its power, persons whose social nature has before been almost wholly disappointed of its natural wants, these are likely even to become bewildered by the strange joy of an organic feeling, while the children who have grown up in a truly Christian family, where their natural affections have been bathed in religion as an element, from their earliest days, will suffer no excitement that is not within the gentle bonds of order and health. In which we see, that nothing can so effectually abate religious extravagances, as to have a style of religion that is formed by the grace of God in the house, and intertwining itself there among the roots of family feeling, grows up into a habit of sanctified love and loving sanctity.

I have also a yet more serious complaint to make, viz: that I see great reason, and the greater the longer I live, to distrust the manner of testing religious character, generally prevalent in connection with this type of religion. We make nothing of habit, nothing of a proposed aim of life connected with Christian duties, but we demand a kind of religious experience that stands in marked contrast with the previous time, particularly in regard to feelings of complacency towards God. For it is assumed that, if any man can express the fact that he has found great emotions of delight in God or the character of God, he is of course a true disciple. And yet nothing is more common than to find the most ecstatic flights of experience, in this particular, and, within a very few months, in a total indifference to religion, and a manifest abandonment of every duty. What now is the secret of these painful defections? Certainly it is not that love is no Scripture evidence of Christ*ian* character. Nothing is declared more frequently.

But it is that the mind, in what we call a revival of religion, may often be thrown and often is thrown into a state of emotion which cannot be distinguished, for the time, from true Christian love, and yet is wholly distant from love.

And it comes to pass, unless I mistake, in the following manner: First, it is in the nature, as I have said, of every human mind, when looking upon God in the simple attitude of contemplation, as upon a picture, to feel that he is a perfectly excellent and lovely being. No enmity rises, no turbid feeling springs into life, unless it consciously reflects on itself as unworthy and wholly unlike to God, or recollects in its own determination to adhere to courses of wrong which God forbids. And it lies in the very facts of the case, you will observe beforehand, that if any person can be held for a length of time to this *contemplative view*, he will, for the same length of time, feel that God is lovely, and that is a feeling which no man can distinguish from love, as a practical embrace of God and his law, until it is put to the test, and made to try itself by the Scripture method of trying love, that is, by the keeping of God's commandments. Accordingly a man wholly irreligious in his life comes within the sphere of a revival of religion, he hears a great deal of preaching, thinks much upon what he hears, becomes a good deal heated by the general excitement, and somewhat confused by his own ill-directed efforts to realize an unknown experience, till at length, having no practical duties on hand to show him the conflict of his will with God's authority, and becomes unsphered, as it were, from all subjective thoughts which may keep him apprised of his own unlikeness to God, by the total absorption of his mind in the *objective* realities of religion—what wonder is it that his soul takes fire before God, and blazes up to heaven in a passionate admiration of his beauty and glory? And this new rhapsody, this strange kindling

of enthusiasm, he is sure must be Christian love—now his sins are forgiven, and his peace with God is sealed!

On precisely this kind of evidence generally, converts are accepted as such at the door of the church, and admitted to the interior rites of discipleship. In fact, no evidence of Christian character is considered so decisive, as that which is found in a change of emotions. This is love, the new heart, the new taste, the new instinct which displaces the old instinct of hatred—every one that loveth is born of God. Undoubtedly the text is true, but it is also true that love has a test, even the keeping of God's commandments; and until that test is added, the less we rest upon mere emotions, however strange, the better. And yet how many are nursed in a presumptuous confidence that all is right with God, because they have had their passions kindled, for once, in this way by the beauty and glory of God! What careful minister, seeing how many are gathered round him, in the church, who manifest no real love to God in the practical duties of life, and have never shown any Christian character, save that they once were subjects of a religious rhapsody, has not often staggered under the suspicion of some dismal error, in the current views of religious experience.

For myself, I feel obliged, in faithfulness to God, to declare, that I have more than a suspicion on this subject. Indeed, my own experience as a pastor, connected with the thougnts expressed above, has compelled me to feel that, if a young person or child comes to me, in a time of religious quiet, and simply asks to be admitted as a disciple to the ordinances, disclosing a habit of private devotion, declaring a serious purpose and desire to live a religious life, and indicating a settled spirit of *dependence on God for the sustenance of all good exercises*, I have a far better and more reliable evidence of Christian character, than any sudden burst of ecstatic emotion towards God can

possibly yield. These too, as experience will abundantly show, are the persons who maintain the best examples of piety afterwards. We see too, in such examples, that the more closely piety is wedded to habit, and the more thoroughly it is interwoven with common life, the healther and firmer is the growth. It wants not great experiences to make great Christians. Between ecstatic flights and godly lives there is no valid connection. But when the spirit of God sanctifies the table and the hearth, and makes the homes temples of piety to childhood, when newness of life begins with education or nurture, and not in high scenes or explosive changes, then the church of God, growing up, like a nation or empire, from a silent law of increase, in its own nature, becomes a compact organic frame, having the vital spirit, as it is the body of Christ himself.

I have spoken already in my 'Discourses' of many evils and defects in our present type of practical religion—the mischievous impressions it gives to children; the discouragement of all right aims and efforts wrought in their minds; and the artificial hostility to religion produced in their minds, by modes of treatment that are contrary to first principles. Baptism, too, we are holding, as an empty tradition; a form, the soul of which is evaporated and lost; robbing thus ourselves and our children of all the proper benefits of the rite, and giving to its rejectors the strongest argument they have against it. It was for these unhappy defects and errors in our style of piety, that I was moved to seek a remedy, and I struck at the radical error of training up children for future conversion. I showed, by thirteen distinct arguments, that the only true aim and expectation of Christian nurture is that the child is to grow up a Christian—not doubting that I was offering to our churches a great principle, worthy of their profound consideration, and one that contains a remedy for the principal defects of piety and character, by which their honor is

defaced and their prosperity hindered. And what now has been the result? Has one of my thirteen arguments been answered? Not one, unless I am to concede that an objection raised against my argument from "*organic causes*," and hung on the words, without any consideration of their meaning, is to be taken as an answer. With this single exception, which is no exception, all my proofs stand, to this hour, untouched and in their original integrity, and the public mind, meantime, fogged by "dangerous tendencies" and misrepresentations and worn-out theories, is busying itself in false issues, that have nothing to do with the real merits of the question. Is it now too much to entreat of our ministers and churches that, after they have sufficiently punished my heresies, they will begin to have some compassion on themselves; return to the question, as it is, and see whether God is not offering them a medicine here, for the want of which they are likely even to die?

But there now remains, brethren of the committee, a question that must rest with you, viz: what shall be done with my book? I did not ask you to publish it at the first; I do not ask you to resume the publication now. As far as I am personally concerned, it is of the least possible consequence whether you do it or not. Possibly you erred in deciding to publish it, though not because of any heresy in it. Possibly you may have erred again in suspending the publication. That I leave with you. On your title-page you say, "Approved by the Committee of Publication," in which you seem to suppose that you are really, as a committee, intrusted with this matter, and have a judgment of your own concerning it. Have you, in truth, such an official trust, or do you mean to say, by giving up your judgment, the moment your constituents judge differently, that there is yet another out-door committee of panic-mongers and wire-pullers back of you, before whom you engage to surrender, and when they so decree, unsay

your own judgments and take back your own acts? If that be necessary, then it is a most dishonorable necessity—dishonorable I do not mean for you; for I have perfect confidence in the integrity of your aims, and I think I understand the difficulty of your position; but dishonorable because of the factious and disorderly spirit, which has obliged a respectable committee to sacrifice their official doings, in order to save their society; for if any fault of dignity appears in this transaction, it is chargeable mainly not on you, but on some very lamentable defect of character rather, in the religious community you represent. I only think that to prevent a revelation so undignified, some degree of stubbornness might have been pardoned in you.

Since, then, it is not you that have thrown yourselves against my character as a teacher of truth, but a body of Christian ministers and persons of influence sufficiently numerous to sway the movements of the Massachusetts churches, I turn from you to them, and I hope the expostulations I may venture to offer will be received as kindly as they are meant. The violence they have done my character, it will be seen, justifies me in this boldness, and the high ground of security to which I have been able to bring my argument, helps me to speak with the better chance of effect. Indeed, it was only the opportunity here given me of saying some things with propriety, for the benefit of religion, which almost never can be said without presumption, that finally decided me in the purpose to undertake this second exposition of my subject.

Brethren of Massachusetts, the Publishing Committee of your Sabbath-School Society, a grave and judicious body of men, whom you appointed, I presume, because of the confidence you had in their character, after a long and careful examination of two discourses I had written, decided to give them to the public. Two or three critics, not more capable certainly of detecting error than they, have since

discovered dangerous tendencies and other like shadows of evil lurking in the tract published. In a moment, you renounce the judgment of your committee, you grow sensitive, you vent your dissatisfaction in acts of rudeness to a stranger, you circulate and print stories implicating my word, you go on to propagate your uneasiness, and stir yourselves up into a clamor, till finally you compel your committee, if they will save the society, to suspend the sale of the book. Now also you discover, if you have read these pages, that you had, after all, gotten before your time, and that the panic by which you have been agitated had no intelligent cause. In view of facts like these, have you not some opportunity to discover that there is a degree of sensitiveness to opinions among you, which exceeds the limits of reason, and certainly does not indicate as great breadth of character as would be desirable in this age of the world?

You have also a metropolitan position, as regards the churches of New England, and you must not wonder if, on this account, you are a subject of study and of observation. Pardon me if I say that we are not always satisfied with the manner in which you fill your office. You have men of the highest worth and character among you, men who are fit to lead you into better and wiser demonstrations, and who earnestly deplore, as I certainly know, the very unhappy spirit and the narrow counsels which now predominate in your churches. But they prefer apparently not to encounter a religious temperament, which may prove too uncomfortable to their peace, and retire rather from the place they ought to occupy, than come forward to assert a position worthy of their character and talents. We deplore, in particular, the relation in which you seem to stand to the Unitarians. God has made both them and you to change since the separation, and has carried you on thus to a position essentially new, but you seem unable to *discover* it. Unitarianism was the necessary birth of a

dead orthodoxy, and when it has ceased to exist, for cease it assuredly will, it will not be found to have existed in vain. Indeed, it may finally be discovered, that Unitarianism is nothing but the proper result of a false assumption, that has run through all the dogmatic efforts of the church, ever since dogmatic theology was invented: which, if it be once cast out, will carry off with it no small part of our strifes, and leave us to subside into the proper unity of the truth. I ask no assent to such a suggestion, for I have not time to verify the probability of it. Enough that it is possible or conceivable.

Meantime, it is perfectly clear to observation, that Unitarianism is not content with itself. Conscious undoubtedly of possessing important truths, it reveals, at least, a suspicion of its own *completeness*, and presents itself, in this view, as a most interesting subject of study. And if there were any such freedom of conference between you and the Unitarians as there might be, if there was a disposition to present great truths held by yourselves, in shapes that would clear them of difficulty, the want they suffer of these truths would scarcely fail of inducing their acceptance. I observe, too, that they often extend themselves towards you, in friendly demonstrations, which, though they do not come to you on their knees, ought to be taken as inviting and offering a reconsideration. Could you now come forward like men who trust their own principles, to do something worthy of your age, it is scarcely supposable that good results, and these of a very important character, would not follow. But, instead of this, you seem to be so much afraid of your own principles that you cannot suffer a friendly approach of any kind; and to think a new thought, or to seek to reproduce an old doctrine, in some variant shape, that, without sacrificing even a hair of the truth, will obviate their objections, is too frightful to be endured. I even observe, that if you happen, by some accident, to

have preached a thoroughly orthodox sermon which they are tempted to approve, you throw your inkstand at them, as Luther did at the devil, to keep them off! Could there be a worse infatuation?

Meantime, the Episcopal church is waiting for the Unitarian body, in Boston, to fall, as a ripe fruit, into its hands, and actually holding its hands for the prize; which, if they do not receive, it will not be the fault of many among yourselves. Perhaps the hope of Episcopacy, in this respect, is more sanguine than it need be. But what do we see, if any among the Unitarians become dissatisfied, and desire to find some form of religion more adequate to their spiritual wants? Seldom do they stop with you, but they pass directly on to the hands of the bishop. They prefer even to take a type of religion foreign to New England, and one that has no sympathy with our institutions, rather than to stop with you, who are bound up with them in the ties of a common history. An Episcopal writer, too, has just been calling the attention of your Boston public to what he considers to have been the radical defects of our religion, as illustrated in our history, evidently with a view to show such as become dissatisfied, in any degree, with Unitarianism, that there is a place of rest and satisfaction in Episcopacy. On this subject he has produced a calm, well-studied, and eloquent tract. This tract was written without any knowledge of my 'Discourses,' and they without any knowledge of the tract, and yet you will observe, that the defect, which I was endeavoring to supply, is precisely the same with that out of which he draws all the mischiefs that have befallen us. The impression left by the tract is, that Episcopacy is the proper remedy. I have endeavored to suggest a remedy consistent with our history, and the ecclesiastical frame of our churches, and, lo! you raise such a storm that my book is silenced!

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Brethren, whether you will believe it or not, a new day has come. If we will, we can make it a better day, but it demands a stature of thought and feelings such as we must attain ourselves in a degree to realize. We must be firm for the truth, and, for that very reason, ready to detect our own errors. We must accept the legacy left us by our manly fathers, a legacy of labor and duty and progress, and taking our stand for sound doctrine, we must refuse to think any doctrine sound which does not help us to grow, or any growth a reality, which does not include a growth in wisdom and breadth and Christian dignity.

SPIRITUAL ECONOMY

OR

REVIVALS OF RELIGION.*

We do not undertake the vindication of revivals of religion. The Divine Husbandry in them is rather our study. Shall we mask our conviction, that here is a want which has long demanded grave attention? that the views of this subject entertained by many, are unripe and partial, their notions of Christian instrumentality confused, and their practice desultory to the same degree? The discredit accruing from this cause is really the heaviest argument that lies against revivals—heavier than all the attacks of their adversaries. Indeed, if we had it in hand to convince the adversaries, we know not how we could hope more effectually to succeed, than by unfolding the Divine Husbandry, the Reason of God's Economy in them—which now is our attempt.

The term *revival of religion* is one not found in the Scriptures, and one to which we have decided objections. It properly denotes a *reviving* of Christian piety, where it has sunk into decline. We use it to denote a scene of conversion, of public exaltation, and victory; and, what is even opposite to its proper meaning, we use it as the name, not of a scene which is counterpart to a state of dishonor in the church, but of something which belongs inherently

* From the Christian Spectator of 1838, vol. x.

to the gospel itself, in the same way as preaching or the sacraments. And then as the term itself is seen to be no accurate measure of the idea, a feeling of distrust arises in all thinking persons. It carries an air of falsity, which is undignified and painful to the mind, perhaps I should rather say an air of crudity, or superstition, as if cant were substituted for intelligence. Or, if it is heartily accepted, the more probable is it that faith embraces some portion of error, and earnestness exults in a smoke of mental confusion. For words are powerful instruments, and false words can never be used without danger; they mislead the action even of philosophic minds, much more of those who never think at all. Still, the term *revival* has found a current use, and convenience will perhaps give it perpetuity. In this article we submit to the term, only endeavoring, since it cannot be avoided, to measure and guard its import.

This not being done—the real position, if any, which revivals hold in the economy of God's spiritual administration not being well ascertained by the Christian body—they are viewed by Christians themselves with all the possible varieties of feeling between idolatry and distrust. Even the same mind often fluctuates between these extremes. To-day the face of God is bright upon his people, and the whole community is, in a sense, visibly swayed by his power, and now, in the happy freshness and vitality of the scene, it is concluded, that there is no true religion but in a revival. To-morrow, as the freshness of new scenes and new feelings is manifestly abating, there begins to be an unhappy and desperate feeling—something must be done—religion itself is dying. And yet what shall be done, it is very difficult to find; for every effort to hold fast the exact degree and sort of feeling, to make a post of exercises, which in their very nature have motion and change, only sinks the vital force more rapidly. But the calm at length comes, and now the prostration is the greater

for the desperate outlay of force used to prevent it. A dissatisfying look now begins to rest, when it is reviewed, on the scene of revival itself; discouragement, unbelief, sloth—a long age of lead follows. Secretly sickened by what is past, many fall into real distrust on spiritual experiences. Many have made so heavy a draft on their religious vitality or capacity, that something seems to be expended out of the sensibility even of their conscience—they sink into neglects, or crimes close upon the verge of apostasy; or they betake themselves to the cheap and possible perfectionism of antinomian irresponsibility. The extreme we here depict is not often reached; but there is very often a marked approach towards it. The consequence is, that the religious life, thus unskilfully ordered, is unhappy, wears a forced look, goes with a perplexed and halting gait.

Our present aim, then, is to ascertain the real office and position of revivals—to furnish, if possible, a view of them which may be safely held at all times, and must be so held, if any steady and intelligent conduct in these matters is to be secured. We hope to establish a higher and more solid confidence in revivals, and, at the same time, to secure to the cause of evangelical religion a more natural, satisfactory, and happy, as well as a more constant movement.

They are grounded, we shall undertake to show, both in honor and in dishonor. They belong in part to the original appointment and plan of God's moral administration, in which part, they are only modes or varieties of divine action, necessary to our renewal and culture in the faith. For the remainder, they are made necessary by the criminal instability of God's people, or take their extreme character from unripe or insufficient views, in their subjects and conductors. The two sides of the subject, thus stated, will require to be prosecuted separately.

If we are to show revivals of religion in place, (as a

geologist might say,) or as they stand, related to the general system of God's works, purposes and ends, we need, first of all, to show in place the doctrine itself of spiritual agency. In speaking of the divine agency in men, we are obliged to use many and various figures of speech, by way of giving sufficient vividness and practical life to the truth, to make it answer its moral ends. We speak of the Spirit of God as "descending," or "coming down," or "sent down," as "poured out," as "present" in a given assembly or place, as "grieved away," or "dwelling" in the heart of the believer. In all this, if we understand ourselves, we only dramatize the divine action with a view to give it reality and conversableness. But some, there is reason to fear, understand and apply these terms quite too literally. They separate the divine agency in men, from the general system in which it belongs—they make the doctrine special in such a sense that God is himself desultory in it, coming and going, journeying between the earth and the sky, while all his other operations go on by a general and systematic machinery, which takes care of itself.

The word of God sometimes speaks of the divine or spiritual agency in men, as if it were only a new or varied extension of the divine presence, and uses the term *presence* as convertible with *spirit*. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? whither shall I flee from thy presence?" "Cast me not away from thy presence; take not thy Holy Spirit from me." "When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

Favored by this example, if we leave out of sight the distinctions of the trinity, which we may for the sake of greater simplicity in our subject, we shall readily see, that the doctrine of spiritual agency is grounded in the simple doctrine of GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE. Here it is in place. Of this, in fact, it is only a member.

What do we mean by God's omnipresence? If we speak

intelligently, not the extension, not the local diffusion of the divine substance. We mean, negatively, that we can conceive of no place above God's works or outside of them where the divine nature resides; there *is* no such place. We are, therefore, obliged to think of God as in-resident in his works. Next we mean, positively that God is potentially present—present in act and sway, (whatever may be true of his substance or its relations to space,) filling all things. The most ready illustration of this subject is the soul residing in the body. In what precise organ its throne is we know not; but virtually or energetically, it is all in every part. It is there to perceive, to have control and use, and it is one will which actuates and systematizes the action of all the parts together.

Let it not offend, that we reduce the warm and glowing doctrine of the agency of the Holy Spirit to mere cold omnipresence. But rather let some just degree of warmth be given to the latter—a doctrine chilled by the stagnant unbelief, and the more stagnant philosophy of men. The true notion of omnipresence shows God in action every where, as much as in the matters of grace. He is in all things, not simply as staying in them, perchance asleep; but he is in them by a presence of power, design and feeling; moving all, advancing in all, towards his great appointed ends. God is not entombed in his works. That vital touch, which the bier felt and sent into the quickened youth, touches all things, and they live unto God. Forms are his pliant investiture. Laws are the currents of his will, flowing towards the ends of his reason. The breast of universal nature glows with his warmth. It enlivens even the grave, and the believer's flesh, feeling the Lord of the resurrection by, resteth in hope. When we reduce the work of the Spirit, then, in man, to a branch of the divine omnipresence, we seem, on the other part, to hear *the eternal* voice lift up itself to the worlds also, the forms,

the forces, and thunder their holy inaugural through the burnished pillars of the universe, saying, "Know ye not, that *ye* are the temple of the living God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you!"

But observe, more distinctly, the doctrine of God's omnipresence does not affirm, that he is present to all things in in the same sense. Presence being identical with act and sway, it has of course this law in itself, that God is present to each thing according to what it is, and according to what he his doing with it. Thus he is present to matter as matter, and not as mind, molding its forms, constructing its incidents. To vegetable natures he is present according to what they are, and according to their several growths and kinds. So to a man he is present as animate in body, in spirit an image of itself. If man falls into sin, he is then present to him as a sinner, offended by his transgressions and averse to his character. If he undertake to redeem, he is then present as prosecuting such an object; convincing of sin, righteousness, and a judgment to come. And now, if any one is brought to repentance, God is present to him in a still more intimate and glorious way. In all the orders of created being before named, God has found nothing to reciprocate his moral feelings; but here he finds something which suits and sympathizes with his joys, his principles, his whole spirit. Here his holiness enters into a resting-place and a congenial hospitality. He calls it his home, his palace, his sanctuary, and here he dwells, bestowing the cherishments of a God in friendship. This, by way of eminence, is called the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But here the great law of omnipresence still pertains—God is present to believers according to their character, their times, their works, their wants, and the great result he purposes to bring them to. We are to expect, of course, that there will be a great variety in the manner of his presence, or, what is the same, in the kind of act and sway

he will exert in them. He will strengthen what is good, fan out what is evil, shed peace, impart knowledge and understanding, invigorate hope, stimulate, try, purify—in a word, he will order his agency in every way so as to communicate more of himself to them, and complete them in his likeness. So Paul, contemplating the Spirit in believers under the figure of an air-medium, common, or present, both to the divine mind and to ours, says, "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Like some breath of wind, which has passed through fragrant trees and banks of flowers, searching them and bringing grateful flavors of them; so the all-present Spirit ever wafts upon us the deep things, the hidden fragrance, and the treasured sweetness of the divine nature.

The doctrine of divine agency in men amounts, then, to this: that God is present to men, according to what they are and his purposes in them, just as he is present to material natures, according to what they are and what he will do with them. No man who believes in the divine omnipresence, the universal act and sway of God, can reasonably question the work of the Spirit in men. So far from being any presumptuous claim in us, to think, that God works in us to will and to do, that he may mold us unto himself, it is rather presumptuous to question it. To believe, that God is present in act and sway to the vital functions of a finger, and not to a mind, or the character and welfare of a mind, is to reverse all notion of justness and real dignity in the divine counsels.

If these reasonings concerning the doctrine of divine agency are somewhat dry and abstruse to the general reader, it is yet hoped, that such as are more practiced in questions of this sort, will have a higher estimate of their importance. They enable us to enter on the spiritual economy of revivals at a great advantage, and from ground high enough to command the whole field.

It is too readily conceded—indeed, it is often stoutly insisted on, even by those who may be called extreme revivalists—that every thing of a periodical or temporary nature in religion, is, of course, dishonorable and suspicious. The adversaries of revivals are ready, of course, to coincide. Further, they are specially offended, when it is claimed, that God exercises any temporary or periodical sway in men. In their view it is nothing but a weak conceit, or the dream of a wild enthusiasm, when God is supposed to be specially operative, in the conversion of men, at any particular time and place, or in any single community.

But if a periodical agency be so derogatory to God's honor, what shall be thought of the seasons, the intervals of drought and rain, and all the revolving cycles of outward change? If the adversaries of revivals believe in God's omnipresence, is there not a presence of act in all these things, according to their nature and his purpose in them, as there is supposed to be in the spiritual changes which affect communities? On their principle, nature ought to perfect her growths in the scorchings of an eternal sun, or in the drenchings of an everlasting rain, and the flowers ought to stand, from age to age, changeless as petrifactions. They ought to see, from year to year, the same clouds in the same shapes, glued fast upon the sky, and the same wind, everlastingly exact to a degree of their thermometer, ought to blow upon them. But no; nature is multiform and various on every side. She is never doing exactly the same thing, at one time, which she has done at another. She brings forth all her bounties by inconstant applications and cherishments endlessly varied. A single thought extended in this direction, were enough, it would seem, to show us, that while God is unchangeable, he is yet infinitely various—unchangeable in his purposes, various in his means.

Is it said, that God however acts in nature by general laws? So doubtless he does in the periodical and various cultivation of his Spirit. All God's works and agencies are embraced and wrought into one comprehensive system, by laws. (Even miracles themselves, are credible only as being, in some sense, subject to laws.) But he is no less the author of variety, that he produces variety by system.

Is it said, that God produces the changes of nature by second causes? Is it meant, we ask in reply, to deny God's omnipresence? Having instituted second causes to manage for him, has the divine nature gone upon a journey, or is it, peradventure, asleep? Or is God still present, (present, remember, by act and sway,) inhabiting all changes? The notion of a second cause in nature, consistent with the divine omnipresence—meaning any thing by the term—it is somewhat difficult to frame. And as God's omnipresence is an undoubted truth, it is better and more philosophic not to displace it, by one that is doubtful.

But we pass on. And it is instructive to advert, as we pass, to the various and periodical changes of temperament which affect men in other matters than religion. Sometimes one subject has a peculiar interest to the mind, sometimes another. Sometimes the feelings chime with music, which at others is not agreeable. Society of a given tone is shunned to-day, though eagerly sought yesterday. These fluctuations are epidemical, too, extending to whole communities, and infecting them with an ephemeral interest in various subjects, which afterwards they wonder at themselves, and can in no way recall. No observing public speaker ever failed to be convinced, that man is a being, mentally, of moods and phases, which it were as vain to attempt the control of, as to push aside the stars. These fluctuations, or mental tides, are due, perhaps, to physical *changes,* and perhaps not. They roll round the earth like

invisible waves, and the chemist and physician tax their skill in vain to find the subtle powers that sway us. We only know, that God is present to these fluctuations, whatever their real nature, and that they are all inhabited by the divine power. Is it incredible, then, that this same divine power should produce periodical influences in the matter of religion—times of peculiar, various, and periodical interest? For ourselves we are obliged to confess, that we strongly suspect that sort of religion which boasts of no excitements, no temporary and changing states; for we observe that it is only towards nothing, or about nothing, that we have always the same feeling.

Need we say, again, that progress towards some end, which is the law of all God's works and agencies, necessarily involves variety and change. Spring, for example, is the first stage of a progress. The newness, therefore, of spring, the first beginnings of growth, must wax old, and change their habit. So it is impossible, that the first feelings of religious interest in the heart should remain. There is a degree of excitation in the strangeness of new feelings, and so likewise in the early scenes of a revival of religion, which belongs to their novelty, and which is by no means inconsiderable or improper. Such is human nature, that it could not be otherwise. In fact, there is no reason to doubt, that God, in framing the plan or system of his spiritual agencies, ordained fluctuations and changing types of spiritual exercise, that he might take advantage, at intervals, of novelty in arresting and swaying the minds of men. These are the spring-times of his truth, otherwise in danger of uniform staleness. Thus he rouses the spiritual lethargy of men and communities, and sways their will to himself, by aid of scenes and manifestations not ordinary or familiar. Nor is it any thing derogatory to the divine agency in the case, that the spiritual spring cannot remain perpetual; for there is a progress in God's

works, and he goes on through change and multiform culture to ripen his ends. Doubtless, too, there may be a degree of sound feeling, apart from all novelty, in a revival of religion, which human nature is incompetent permanently to sustain; just as one may have a degree of intellectual excitement and intensity of operation, which he cannot sustain, but which is nevertheless a sound and healthy activity. In writing a sermon, for example, every minister draws on a fund of excitability, which he knows cannot be kept up beyond a certain bound, and this without any derogation from his proper sanity.

But we come to a stage in the subject, where the advantage of our doctrine of spiritual agency is to be more manifest. God has a given purpose to execute, we have said, in those who have entered on the religious life, viz: to produce character in them. To this end he dwells in them, and this is the object of his spiritual culture. And here, at the beginning, he encounters the general truth, that varieties of experience and exercise are necessary to the religious character. How then shall he adjust the scale of his action, if not to produce all such varieties as are necessary for his object? We have just remarked on the changes of temperament in men and communities, by which now one, now another theme is brought to find a responsive note of interest. What is the end of this? Obviously it is, that we may be practiced in all the many-colored varieties of feeling, and led over a wide empire of experience. Were it not for this—or if men were to live on, from childhood to the grave, in the same mood of feeling, and holding fast to the same unvarying topic of interest—they would grow to be little more than animals of one thought. To prevent which, and ripen what we call natural character to extension and maturity, *God is* ever leading us round and round invisibly, by new

successions of providence and new affinities of feeling. Precisely the same necessity requires, that religious character be trained up under varieties of experience, and shaped on all sides by manifold workings of the Spirit. Now excitements must be applied to kindle, now checks to inspire caution or invigorate dependence. Now the intellect must be fed by a season of study and reflection; now the affections freshened by a season of social and glowing ardor. By one means, bad habits are to be broken up; by another, good habits consolidated. Love, it is true, must reign in the heart through all such varieties; but the principle of supreme love is one that can subsist in a thousand different connections of interest and temperaments of feeling. At one time, it demands for its music a chorus of swelling voices, to bear aloft its exulting testimony of praise; at another, it may chime rather with the soft and melancholy wail just dying on its ear. And so, in like manner, it needs a diversity of times, exercises, duties and holy pleasures. It needs, and for that reason it has, not only revivals and times of tranquillity, but every sort of revival, every sort of tranquillity. Sometimes we are revived individually, sometimes as churches, sometimes as a whole people, and we have all degrees of excitation, all manner of incidents. Our more tranquil periods are sometimes specially occupied, or ought to be, in the correction of evil habits; or we are particularly interested in the study of religious doctrines necessary to the vigor of our growth and usefulness; or we are interested to acquire useful knowledge of a more general nature, in order to our public influence, and the efficient discharge of our offices. In revivals we generally prefer the more social spheres of religious exercise; so now the more private and solitary experiences may be cultivated. Such is the various travail, which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith.

Another end prosecuted by the Spirit, in his work, is the empowering of the Christian body, and the extension of good, through them and otherwise, to the hearts of others. Here also there is no doubt that changes and seasons of various exercise, like these called revivals, add to the real power of the faith. We are so prone to think nothing of that which always wears exactly the same color and look, that holiness itself need to change its habit and voice to command notice, or impress itself on the attention. The power too of the Christian body rests, in the main, on its appearing to the world to be inhabited and swayed by an agency above nature. And this can never appear, except by means of changes and periodical exaltations therein. Nature would make no manifestation of Him who dwells in her forms, if all stood motionless; if the sun stood fast and clear in everlasting noon; if there were no births, decays, explosions, surprises. Nature is called the garment of the Almighty, but if there were no motion under the garment, it would seem a shroud, rather than a garment of life. God is manifested in nature by the wheeling spheres, light, shade, tranquillity, storm—all the beauties and terrors of time. So the Spirit will reveal his divine presence, through the church, by times of holy excitement, times of reflection, times of solitary communion, times of patient hope. A church standing always in the same exact posture and mold of aspect, would be only a pillar of salt in the eyes of men; it would attract no attention, reveal no inhabitation of God's power. But suppose that now, in a period of no social excitement, it is seen to be growing in attachment to the Bible and the house of God, storing itself with divine or useful knowledge, manifesting a heavenly-minded habit in the midst of a general rage for gain, devising plans of charity to the poor and afflicted, reforming offensive habits, chastening bosom sins: *suppose,* in short, that principles adopted in a former

revival are seen to hold fast as principles, to prove their reality and unfold their beauty, when there is no longer any excitement to sustain them—here the worth and reality of religious principles are established. And now let the Spirit move this solid enginery once more in glowing activity, let the church, thus strengthened, be lifted into spiritual courage and exaltation, and its every look and act will seem to be inhabited by a divine power—it will be as the chariot of God, and before it even stubbornness will tremble.

We have spoken already of the probable fact, that God has designed to take advantage of novelty in his plan of spirtual action. Quite as great an addition is made to the efficacy of his operations, by the advantage he takes of the social instincts of men. There is no impression which is not powerfully augmented by participation. What a community, what a crowded assembly feels, is powerfully felt. Hence it is an article of the divine economy in revivals, that whole communities shall be moved together, as it were, by common gales of the Spirit. The hold thus taken of men is powerful, often to a degree even tremendous, and many a covenant with death is disannulled which no uniform or unvaried tenor of divine agency, no mere personal and private dealing of the Spirit, would ever have shaken.

There is one more advantage taken of men by periodical or temporary dispensations, in the very fact, that they are temporary. The judgment and observation of many who preach the gospel will bear us witness, that the certainty felt by those who are at any time enlightened and drawn by the Spirit, that they will not long be dealt with in the same manner as now—that by delay they may dismiss the present grace, and lose the most favored moment given them to secure their salvation—is the strongest and most urgent of all motives. This, in fact, is absolutely requisite to the stress and cogency of all means and agen-

cies. Such is the procrastinating spirit of men, so fast bound are they in the love of sin, that however deeply they may feel their own guilty and lost estate, nothing but the fact that God is now giving them opportunities and aids which are peculiar and temporary, would ever foreclose delay. We need look no farther to see the folly of supposing, that God must not act periodically or variously, if he act at all, in renewing men. Why act uniformly when it would defeat all the ends of action?

This attempt to exhibit the spiritual economy of God in revivals, might be prosecuted much farther. It would be useful, too, if we could stop here to admire the wisdom of God's spiritual husbandry, the systematic grandeur with which he compasses all his ends, and the illustrious honor that shines in his works of grace.

But we must hasten forward. And here, on the second side, or the side of dishonor, we pass to views and exhibitions less agreeable, though not, we hope, less welcome.

We should be sorry if, in what we have advanced, a shadow of countenance has been given to the impression that the Christian is allowed, at some times, to be less religious than at others. He is under God's authority, and bound by his law at all times. He must answer to God for each moment and thought of his life. His covenant-oath consecrates all his life to God, and stipulates for no intermission of service. At no time can he shrink from religious obligation, without dishonor to his good faith, together with a loss of character and of God's favor. Furthermore still, it is his duty and privilege ever to be filled with the Spirit. The believer is one chosen for his in-dwelling. He is consecrated to be the divine temple, and God will never leave his temple, except he is driven away by profanation—grieved away. "I have somewhat *against* thee," said the Saviour, "because thou hast left thy

first love." He did not require, of course, that the novelty and first excitement of feeling should last, but that love, the real principle of love, should lose ground in them, was criminal. Let us not be mistaken. The Christian is as much under obligation at one time as at another, though not under obligation to be ever doing the same things—no intermission, no wavering or slackness is permitted him; nay, he is bound to increase, or gather strength in his religious principles, every day and hour of his existence.

But how shall we harmonize this with what we have advanced in the first side of our subject? The answer is this: God favors and appoints different modes or kinds of religious interest, but not backslidings, or declensions of religious principle. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are diversities of operation, but it is the same God which worketh all and in all. There is a common mistake in supposing that the Spirit of God is present in times only of religious exaltation, or, if it be true, that such need be the case. It is conceivable, that He may be doing as glorious a work in the soul, when there is but a very gentle, or almost no excitement of feeling. He may now be leading the mind after instruction, teaching the believer how to collect himself, and establish a regimen over his lawless will and passions, searching the motives, inducing a habit of reflection, teaching how to carry principles without excitement, drawing more into communion perhaps with God, and less for the time with men. And while he conducts the disciple through these rounds of heavenly discipline, we are by no means to think that he is, of course, less religious, or has less supreme love to God, than he had in the more fervid season of revival. A soldier is as much a soldier when he encamps as when he fights, when he stands with his loins girt about, and his feet shod with the preparation, as when he quenches the fiery darts of the enemy. The Christian warfare is not all

battle. There are times in it for polishing the armor, forming the tactics, and feeling the vigor of the host.

These remarks bring us to conclude, that there is, in what we call revivals of religion, something of a periodical nature, which belongs to the appointed plan of God in his moral operations; but as far as they are what the name imports, revivals of *religion*, that is, of the principle of love and obedience, they are linked with dishonor; so far they are made necessary by the instability and bad faith of Christ's disciples. But here it must be noted, that the dishonor does not belong to the revival, but to the decay of principle in the disciple, which needs reviving. There ought to be no declension of real principle; but if there is, no dishonor attaches to God in recovering his disciple from it, but the more illustrious honor. Thus it is very often true, when a revival seems to have an extreme character, that the fact is due, not to the real state produced, but to the previous fall, the dearth and desolation with which it is contrasted. And commonly, if the ridicule thrown upon a revival were thrown upon the worldliness, the dishonorable looseness of life and principle which preceded, it would not be misplaced.

We now pass on to a stage in which dishonor attaches to the scene of revival itself. This is, when it takes an extreme character, which is not given it by the Spirit of God, but originates in some mistake of opinion, or extravagance of conduct in the subjects and conductors. We cannot pretend here to specify every sort of error which may vitiate a revival, or give it an extreme character; but we will note a few leading mistakes which have a prevalent influence.

And a capital mistake is that of supposing, that we ought to have a revival, so called, or the exact mood of a revival, at all times. It is taken for granted, when the peculiar *fervor of* the work begins to abate, that the disciples are

sinking into sloth and criminal decay, and never, that the Spirit is now giving a varied complexion to his work. Prodigious efforts are made to rally the church to renewed activity. The voice of supplication is tried. But all in vain: it is praying against God and nature, and must be vain. Not, that it must be vain in every case; but only in cases where God's plan is otherwise ordered, or where the natural excitabilities of the church are so far exhausted as to demand a different sort of exercise. Effort spent in this way, produces additional exhaustion and discouragement. A tedious intermission of life follows. At length the susceptibilities of nature to excitement and attention recruit themselves, as by a very long sleep, and there flames out another period of over-worked zeal to be succeeded as before. If, instead of such a course, the disciple was taught, as the revival, so called, declines, that God is now leading him into a new variety of spiritual experience, where he has duties to discharge, as clear, as high, as in the revival itself; if he were encouraged to feel, that God is still with him; if he were shown what to do, and how to improve the new variety of state—taught the art of growth in the long run—how to make the dews, the rain, the sun, and the night, all lend their aid alike; in a word, if he were taught the great Christian art of discerning the mind of the Spirit, so that he shall be ever pliant thereto, and not to pass reluctantly into his progressive moods of culture and duty; can any one fail to see, that extremities of action would thus be greatly reduced? He has not some strained and forced sort of religion to live always, which, after all, no straining or forcing can make live. The pendulum swings in smaller vibrations. There is no wide chasm of dishonor, no strained pitch of extravagance, but only a sacred ebb and flow of various but healthful zeal. It is the great evil in that sort of teaching, which insists on the duty of being always in what is called a revival state, that it tries to force

an impossible religion. The supposed obligation is assented to, and the Christian struggles hard to answer it. But nature struggles against him, being utterly unable to keep up such a state. At length he yields, in a perplexed and half-despairing manner, not knowing what it means. Still he owns very dutifully, that it is his sin, and as he tries no more to avoid it, he seems to himself to be sinning by actual and daily consent; and this becomes in fact the real temper of his heart. He gives over all care of his spirit, violates his conscience in other ways, since he must do it in one, and sinks into extreme declension. More judicious views of duty would have saved him.

The feeling, extensively prevalent, that if any thing is to be done in religion, some great operation must be started, is another pernicious mistake. The ordinary must give way to the extraordinary. Machinery must be constructed, and a grand palpable onset moved. Let it not be suspected that we are afraid of all stir and excitement. The views advanced in the former part of our subject should teach us higher wisdom. The greatest and best actions have ever been performed in stages of excited feeling and high personal exaltation. Nothing was ever achieved, in the way of a great and radical change in men or communities, without some degree of excitement; and if any one expects to carry on the cause of salvation, by a steady rolling on the same dead level, and fears continually lest the axles wax hot and kindle into a flame, he is too timorous to hold the reins in the Lord's chariot. What we complain of and resist is, the artificial firework, the extraordinary, combined jump and stir, supposed to be requisite when any thing is to be done. It seems often not to be known, that there is a more efficacious way, and that the extraordinary got up, in action, as in rhetoric, is impotence itself. It must come to pass naturally, or emerge as a natural crisis of the *ordinary*, if it is to have any consequence. How often

would the minister of Christ, for example, who is trying to marshal a movement, do a more effectual work in simply reviewing his own deficiencies of heart and duty, charging himself anew with his responsibilities, and devoting himself more faithfully to his people and to God's whole truth? A secret work thus begun is enough to heave, in due time, a whole community; and it is the more powerful, because it moves in the legitimate order of action. It begins bowing to duty first and chief, and leaves results for the most part to come in their natural shape. It works in the hand of God, trustfully, humbly, pertinaciously, and following whithersoever he leads. And when God leads his servant, as certainly he will, into a crisis of great moment, he is in it naturally, he molds it unto himself, as if constituted for the time to be its presiding power.

Where too much is made of conversions, or where they are taken as the measure of all good, it has a very injurious influence. The saying, constantly repeated and without qualification, that it is the great business of the gospel and of Christian effort to convert men, has about as much error as truth in it. As well might it be said, that the great business of travelers is to set out on journeys The great business of the gospel is to form men to God. Conversion, if it be any thing which it ought to be, is the beginning of the work, and the convert is a disciple, a scholar, just beginning to learn. If all the attention of the church then be drawn to the single point of securing conversions, without any regard to the ripening of them; if it be supposed, that nothing is of course doing when there are no conversions; if there is no thought of cultivation, no valuation of knowledge and character, no conviction of the truth that one Christian well formed and taken care of is worth a hundred mere beginners, who are in danger perhaps of proving that they never begun at all; if revivals themselves are graduated in their value, only by the

number of converts, and Christians in declension are called to repentance *only for the sake of the unconverted public;* the whole strain of movement and impression is one-sided, distorted, and tinctured with inherent extravagance.

We name only one more mistake, having a pernicious influence on the character of revivals, which is, the want of a judicious estimate of the advantages to be gained in times of non-revival. This is the great practical error of our times. Let it startle no one, if we declare our conviction, that religion has as deep an interest in the proper conduct of times of non-revival, as in these periods of glowing excitement. For many religious purposes, and those not the least important, a revival is less advantageous than other times. There is very little trial of principle in a revival, as is proved by facts always developed afterwards, in some of the brightest examples of supposed conversion. The time, pre-eminently the time to strengthen principle and consolidate character, is, when there is no public excitement. And for this reason, God's spiritual husbandry includes such times, and makes them so prolonged as to constitute the greater part of life, showing very conclusively the estimate he has of them. At such times, the disciple is occupied more in study and doctrine, in self-inspection, in contemplation of God, in acting from principle separately from impulse. In times of revival, foundations are broken up, and new impulses received; now, those impulses are consolidated into principle, and permanently enthroned in the heart. This, at least, ought to be so; and because it is not, revivals, when they come, have less power, and a more limited sphere of influence. They are looked on, often, by those who weigh their effects, as only shallow frets of excitement, and in many cases, none but the less considerate and feebler class of minds feel their power. Let not the intervals of revival be undervalued, *or the duties* belonging to them disesteemed. Great occa-

sions are not necessary to good actions. To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the sun. HE HATH MADE EVERY THING BEAUTIFUL IN HIS TIME.

We have thus attempted to ascertain the divine economy in revivals of religion. We see them to be in no degree desultory, except as they partake of human errors and infirmities. They lie imbedded in that great system of universal being and event, which the divine omnipresence fills, actuates, and warms. Here they are cherished, and will be, as long as the redemption of man is dear to the eternal heart, and constitutes one of the ends of God's pursuit. As the gospel is enlarged in the world, and the Christian mind enlightened, they will gradually lose their extremities and dishonorable incidents, and will constitute an ebb and flow, measured only by the pulses of the Spirit. The church will then make a glowing, various, and happy impression. Her armor, though changed, will always shine, and will have a celestial temper in it. Changing her front, she will yet always present a host clad in the full panoply of God.

But really to act on views like these, and give them their legitimate effect, would require the ministry, or many of them, to change somewhat the tone, and enlarge the sphere of their instructions. Many would need to acquire a nicer, more complete, and proportional sense of character themselves, and thus learn to go beyond the line of exercises which only urge repentance, and test the state of their people. By this confined method, this continual beating on the same spot, they only produce a sense of soreness, which recoils from their attempts. It were only necessary to open the epistles of Paul, we should suppose, to see that he moved into a range of topics and duties which find no place in the concern of many modern preachers—discontent, envy, anger, jealousy, ambition, gentleness, purity,

modesty, decency, candor, industry—a catalogue that cannot be recited. We see, at once, that he does not regard the religious character in his converts as a thing by itself, a conversion well tested and followed by a few duties specially religious. He considered the whole character of the disciple—mind, manners, habits, principles—as the Lord's property. He felt that the gospel was intended and fitted to act on every thing evil and ungraceful in man's character, and applied it to that purpose. And thus he sought to present his disciples perfect and complete in all the will of God—a much more difficult and laborious way of preaching than the one to which indolence, we fear, now adds prevalence. Let the minister of truth, then, occupy such intervals as are suitable, and which we have supposed to be ordered of the Spirit for that purpose, in forming the character of his people to things lovely and of good report. Let him take advantage of Scripture history, and especially of the history of Christ's life and manners, to draw out illustrations of character, and beget what is so much needed by the Christian body, a sense of character—of moral beauty and completeness. Let him not use the parable of the talents always to enforce the duty of usefulness. Sometimes, at least, let mention be made of doubling the talents, making the ten twenty, the five ten. Let him follow the people into their business, into their civil duties, and especially into their domestic relations, showing the manner in which children may be trained up as Christians in the nurture of the Lord, seeking to surround the Christian homes with Christian graces, teaching how to make them pleasant to the youth, and at the same time spiritually healthful. And let him do all this in the manner of Paul or Oberlin, as a work of the Spirit, a work into which the Holy Spirit leads him as truly as into any other. The tendrils of the vines are small things, but yet *they support* the grapes. In like manner this disposition

to adorn the doctrine of Christ, by a nice obedience and a faithful copying of the Saviour, is that which knits the Christian, tendril-like, to God's support. On the other hand, the gross movement, always aiming at a chief point of Christian character, without any care to finish a Christian conscience and a Christian taste, is only trying to make the vines adhere by their trunks.

We are not without a sense of deep responsibility in giving these views to the public. If they are misunderstood or misapplied, they may work incredible injury. We are anxious, indeed, lest they be perverted to the justification of real declension from God, and made to sanction a lower and perhaps more inconstant piety than we now have. And yet we are sure that they provide for a higher class of attainments, a more constant growth towards God, and favor the preparation of a new order of Christians, who shall really walk by faith from year to year. In showing the use and necessity of times of non-revival, we do not justify the present habit of Christian declension in these intervals; we rather show the sinfulness of it, that it is unnecessary, that it is a rank abuse of sacred means and privileges. We make it possible for the Christian at such times to be as holy, to do as good a work, to have the communion of God as really as in a revival, and since it is possible to be done, it is only faithlessness, without excuse, when it is otherwise.

Our doctrine naturally terminates here—in proving it to be the great business and art of the Christian to watch for the mind of the Spirit, and shape the life evermore pliantly thereto. They that walk in the Spirit, shall be led by the Spirit; this we firmly believe. Hence the Saviour was at great pains to inculcate on the disciples readiness, watching for their Lord's coming, and observation of the signs of the times. And his Spirit is to help their infirmity of discernment, and guide them by his intercessions or inward

intercourses, to such praying, such work and occupations as are according to God's will. I will guide thee with mine eye, is the sure declaration of God. But in order to this, the Christian must look at the indications of His eye; and in order to this, he must have a single eye himself. He must walk by faith, he must never acquiesce in sin, he must never allow the world to get dominion over him. Doing this, he will be directed what to do, where to go, exercised in the best ways, perform the best service. The EYE OF THE LORD will lead him about through all the rounds of the Spirit, and the glory of the divine holiness will ever encompass him.

O Christian! man renewed by grace, dost thou indeed believe that God inhabits thee with his holiness, and makes thee his temple? Be thou then a temple indeed, a sacred place to him. Exclude covetousness; make not thy Father's house a house of merchandise; deem every sin a sacrilege. Let all thy thoughts within, like white-robed priests, move round the altar, and keep the fire burning. Let thine affections be always a cloud, filling the room and in-wrapping thy priest-like thoughts. Let thy hallowed desires be ever fanning the mercy-seat with their wings.*

* As nine years have elapsed since this article was written, it is only just to say, that while a more enlarged experience has confirmed the general correctness of the reasonings, it has also shown me that parts of the article might easily be improved by reconstruction. But as something would be lost by violating its historical integrity, I have concluded to give it again to the public without important modifications.

GROWTH, NOT CONQUEST,

THE

TRUE METHOD OF CHRISTIAN PROGRESS.*

To roll a snowball and to grow an oak are not the same thing. Enlargement of volume is a result in both cases; but beyond this, they have nothing in common. In one, the result is wrought by an external force; in the other, by a vital force within. In one, the swelling bulk receives all that will adhere to it—snow, mud, or gravel, as it may happen—forming a promiscuous conglomerate mass; in the other, the new matter is carefully selected, taken up internally, digested, assimilated, and built into an organic, vital whole. In the snowball, there is, at no time, any internal power of production or self-enlargement. Not one of the particles in its cold body, can it quicken or fructify; whereas in the tree there is a vital, self-active power, which can work, feed, and send out the extensions of growth, as long as it lives.

The same distinction holds in reference to every organic and vital being; it must have its increase by a law peculiar to vital being; that is, by its own internal activity and a development *from within*. Nor is this less true of the mind, or intellectual life, than of animal and vegetable natures. There is no true enlargement of the mind, no

* From the New Englander of 1844, vol. ii.

increase of intellectual stature, save that which is wrought in and through the internal activity of the mind itself. To be a receiver only of the world's knowledge, to pile up the treasures of libraries in the memory, to overlay the soul with borrowed ornaments, and crowd its capacity with borrowed opinions and arguments, is no better than to swell the body and shape it into proportion by laying on muscles of cloth or of clay. The creative and mercurial energies of the soul itself must be called into action, the man himself must grow. He must learn to think, to wrestle with difficulties; his inventive and critical powers must sharpen their action. What he receives, he must receive as by digestion, and build it into the body of his intellectual being, by a process of internal assimilation. Otherwise his soul will only lie entombed in its knowledge.

So also with piety or Christian character. It must be a growth. Its increase and beauty must be wrought by the activity of spiritual life. Fires will not burn it into the soul. Statutes and penalties will not force it. Self-tortures and penances will as little avail. Sacraments and formal observances will not, of themselves, accomplish more. Its being is its life as a spiritual creature of God, quickened by His light and warmed by His love. Its volume is in its exercise, its aims and objects, its internal struggles and conquests; by which it grows up into Him in whom it lives, showing first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear.

Thus far we have spoken only of those vital natures which are individual. But the same law holds in respect to society; at least, in many of its forms. Society is vital and organic. The family, for example, is a living creature, an organic whole, having a power of unlimited increase in its own vital and prolific nature. A single family, proceeding thus from one parent stock, will suffice to people a nation; nay, it has sufficed to people even the world

itself. It is not like a foundling hospital, which is peopled from without, by inmates gathered from the streets, and by no laws of production within its own nature; but it is one regular coherent growth, a vital organism, unfolding itself till it fills a nation or a world.

The same truth holds, with suitable modifications, in the civil state. The true increase of a nation is not that which is made by conquest and plunder, but that which is the simple development of its vital and prolific resources. Two centuries ago, there came over to these western shores a few thousand men. These were the germ of a great nation here to arise and come into the public history of the world, possibly as a leading member. Potentially speaking, these men had in themselves—that is, in their persons, their principles, their habits and other resources—all that now is or is yet to be of power and greatness in our republic. They went to work with a degree of spirit and energy never before exhibited. Habits of virtuous and frugal industry were unfolded by a wise and careful training. Simplicity of manners, for the first time, appeared, not as a barbaric virtue, but as the proper fruit of simplicity in religion. The mental vigor, produced by the same causes, was yet further sharpened by the necessities of a new state of existence. Population multiplied, wealth increased, the forest fell away at the sound of their axes; the natives retired before the potent and prolific energy of Saxon life, as before the Great Spirit himself. Cities rose upon the shores, the waters whitened to the sun under the sails of commerce, the civil order unfolded itself, as it were naturally, from the germ that blossomed in the May Flower; and, behold, a great, wealthy, powerful and free nation stalks into history with the tread of a giant, fastening the astonished gaze of the world—all in the way of simple growth! We have made no conquests. We have only unfolded our original germ, the mustard-seed of our

first colonization. There is no other kind of national advancement which is legitimate or safe. The civil order must grow as a creature of life, and unfold itself from within. If a nation will suddenly extend its boundaries and build up its splendor by conquest, as in the case of the Roman empire, or in the subjugation of Mexico by Spain, how different is the spectacle. The elements of the civil order, being piled together by mere accretion, are without coherency or unity. The public life does not fill the public mass, and without the organic power of life, it is ready to fall to pieces at the earliest moment. Wealth itself is poverty; power is weakness; breadth is dissipation; numbers, discontent and anarchy. A nation built by growth is as different from a nation built by conquest, as the tree that stands erect, filled with vital sap, covered with joyful verdure, and, when the winter comes, tossing its bare arms victoriously to the storm, from a pile of drift-wood which the floods have heaped upon the shore to rot and perish. Accordingly the very word *nation* implies a nascent order and growth. It is no such pile of ruins as the external accidents of force and conquest may construct; but it is a birth, the unfolding of a vital germ through population, industry, art, literature, law, and religion.

These illustrations bring us to the church of God. They are offered with no other design than to show forth, in a clear, intelligible manner, and, as far as their analogy will go, to substantiate a great and momentous truth, in regard to the increase of the church and the spread of the gospel, of which the church is the embodiment. According to the opinion of Christ himself, the church is as a grain of mustard-seed, and its future spread is to be as the growth of a tree. It is a creature whose vitality is spiritual life, and it can have its increase only by the same law which pertains in all organic living bodies, that is, *by development from within, not by external accretion.* It must be, not as the

snowball, not as the foundling hospital, not as the empire hewn out by conquest, but as the tree rather, the family, the nation, growing by its own internal life.

There is no truth, which the church has, in all past times, been so prone to overlook, or in the neglect of which she has suffered so many and terrible disasters. In fact, almost all the desolations which have befallen the purity and success of the church, have been wrought by attempts to propagate religion and extend the reign of Christ, by forces and instruments that were really external to the church, and not by virtue of spiritual life in her own bosom. And if other desolations are hereafter to follow, as we have too much reason to fear, these also will flow from the same fountain of mischief. And therefore it becomes the church, now that she has undertaken in earnest to achieve the universal reign of the Redeemer, to inquire most carefully whether she is expecting to succeed, by the vital power of her piety and by unfolding her own internal growth, or by the clumsy expedients of mechanism and by instruments that are carnal.

That we may have our eyes opened to the fearful dangers that beset the church, in her proneness to go after external means and instruments, let us glance a moment at some of the mischiefs she has suffered from this source.

First of all, she was seduced from her purity by an expectation of the splendid results to be secured by a union with philosophy. Christianity, the doctrine of Christ and him crucified, was true indeed, a good and heavenly truth; but it was too naked and bald, too destitute of learning and philosophy, to command the respect of the world. And what might not be expected from a union of the Christian doctrine with the wisdom of the schools! Then it would be both true and wise together—both pious and profound; and the whole world would be obliged to accept it speedily!

"We must give to the Greeks," says Clement, "who ask for that wisdom which is in esteem among them, such things as they are accustomed to." Actuated by the same general design, the church was moved to interweave her doctrine with all the various schemes of philosophy current in the world. She went out unto the world, to borrow the world's wisdom, that so she might gain the world. One teacher led her into the embrace of Gnosticism. Another wove her a dress out of the shreds and patches of the Greek wisdom. The Alexandrian teachers toiled with incredible industry, to melt her doctrine into harmony with all the wisdom of all the schools of the world, promising thus to evolve, as the result, a scheme of universal truth. Nor is it to be denied that the church thus drew to her bosom many nominal converts. The snowball rolled up rapidly, and became a tumid mass, amid the applauses of courts and schools; till, at length, it was found that Christianity was perishing under the very means that were extending her nominal dominion. Interpretation was become a jingle of conceits, truth a bundle of metaphysical vagaries, and the church nought but a monstrous aggregation of scholastic rubbish, without spiritual life or unity—a conglomerate mass of dead and putrid members.

Next the church, as if she had no power to live in herself, courted the alliance and protection of the civil state. Princes and thrones became her patrons, parliaments the guardians of her orthodoxy, tithes and excises the resources of her existence, prisons and tortures and fires and chariots of war, the instruments of her power. Here again she spreads her empire, and enrolls nations as her disciples. Only it is proved in the end, that she herself has no existence, save her name, no organic life of her own, no power, no purity, no fructifying element. The hand that molds her is not her own. The strength that maintains her is *external*. If indeed she has become a great tree, there is

yet no internal sap in her trunk; her branches are stuck on by civil enactments, her leaves made to adhere by the screws of torture, her flowers the garish, artificial ornaments of state formalities.

In connection too with these endeavors to find a power out of herself, whereby she might strengthen her dominion, the church has also courted an influence which is mechanical. We speak now of her endeavor to supply spiritual power by means of a grand artificial machinery of forms. According to the true idea of Christ in the economy of the gospel, the church is to unfold herself outwards from the principle of spiritual life within. Forms reverse the order. They are resorted to as an extraneous power, which is to react on the religious spirit of the world, and build the church inward, as it were, from without. First the forms are established, set up as an outward shell; then the world is to be taken within this shell, to be wrought upon by the external influence by which it is invested. The church is thus to be built, not by a growth outward, but by virtue of instruments on the outside, which are purely mechanical—bows, crosses, pictures, penances, vows, sacraments of a physical power, washings, and other carnal ordinances. Here again, as before, the effort is to make the church powerful, by virtue of something external to the church—by instruments as purely mechanical as thumb-screws or prisons. The church, in fact, becomes a great ecclesiastical factory, running its thousand wheels to shape and polish and rub and grind the people into Christian disciples. The work is to begin on the outside, and it is expected to operate inward, and form, in this manner, a spiritual church of God. The result we know: darkness instead of light, credulity instead of faith, penance instead of repentance, superstition instead of piety, pride and bigotry instead of benevolence to man, the keeping of saints' days instead of the spirit of saints, triumphal pomps instead of spiritual liberty.

We see, in this brief glance, how it is that the church has been trying in all ages to increase, not by internal growth, but by conquest and external accretion. She has gone after philosophy, after the civil and military power, after mechanical forms and instruments, after any thing and every thing external, by which she could hope to advance her dominion.

Nor is the reason difficult of discovery. How could she grow by the simple development of spiritual life, when spiritual life was extinct or nearly extinct in her bosom? How could the sap of the vine feed and extend the branches, when they themselves were not connected with the trunk? Man is naturally disinclined to faith, and therefore the church, as the life of God abates and the carnal spirit enters, is ever flying to the senses, to seize upon external aids and instruments, and commence building on the outside. Nor is it any matter how spiritual are the doctrines and religious tests held by the church; we need only be sure that her piety wanes, to be also sure that, if she does any thing for the cause of her Master, she will do it in some work of mere outside industry; for she cannot exert more of spiritual life than she has. The error may change its forms, but its mischievous presence must continue as long as the spiritual deficiency which creates it. Nay, she is the more exposed to this error, in proportion as she is more active for the truth without the spirit of action. Hence the necessity of a thorough intellectual conviction of the great truth we are now asserting—a necessity which is rather increased than diminished, whenever she is engaged, as now, in great enterprises to extend her dominion.

But it may be suspected that our doctrine is one which really cuts off all such enterprises, that if the church is to *have her* increase only by a vital growth or development,

there is no longer any room for the employment of aggressive agencies. We must therefore go into some illustrations, to show the true meaning and exhibit the spirit of our doctrine.

Do we then maintain that the church is simply to stay within herself and grow? Is she never to go forth to them that are without, to make no converts, traverse no seas, go not near the temples of the idols? Is she to light her lamp, retire within her bushel, and stay there till the bushel itself takes fire from the intensity of the inward heat, and the parts adjacent are illuminated by a spontaneous combustion that cannot suppress itself? We need not be reminded that this was not the manner of the Apostles. As little need we be informed that it is the genius of Christianity itself to go about doing good. Nay, it is the genius of the trees also, that they go after foreign matter in the earth and air, by the reduction and assimilation of which, they fill out their volume and put forth their extensions. So far even vegetable growth is aggressive. When, therefore, we maintain that the church has no legitimate increase, except by a vital growth from within, we do not say that she is to be inactive, or that she is never to act aggressively. We only say that all activity or agression which exceeds the measure of spiritual life is fictitious and dangerous; that whatever attempt she puts forth *without life* or beyond the compass of her own piety, is really not put forth by the church at all. She is not to deceive herself by such efforts. They are forced and spasmodical, like the galvanic grasp of a hand that is cut off from the body. But spiritual life is not restrained within local boundaries. Its only limit is its degree. It quickens activities that reach beyond the ocean, or across empires and continents, as easily and as naturally as those that range within parish limits, or within the disciple's own bosom. Whatsoever man or church is alive unto God, is

alive unto all that God has made. In fact, nothing is necessary, nothing is now so much wanted, to increase and energize the activity of the church in her aggressive plans, as more of spiritual life. Hear, O ye people of God!—this is the language of our doctrine: think not that ye can do in the flesh what belongs to the spirit. The kingdom of Christ is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; how then will ye roll it onward with your hands! Quit all formal charities and efforts that outreach your love! As your first offering, bring your heart to your Redeemer. If your work is holy, let your spirit be gracious. If it be a work of love, let love animate the work. Be no more alienated from the life of God! The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment.

Under the pretext that the church has no legitimate increase except by a law of growth, some have maintained, we believe, that our missionary expeditions are inconsistent with the true economy of the gospel. The church, they say, must grow so as to roll over her boundaries, and thus have her extension only as she acts, by her virtues and her spirit, on the neighborhood adjacent. But we must not imagine that the church *has* any boundaries. God has given her the world. All that Christ, her divine Head, reigns over and claims for his own domain, is hers also. She never goes abroad, except as locomotion is predicated of her members. Locally speaking, there is no external region into which she may sally after conquests. The world is all her own. She is every where at home in it, as a nation within its boundaries, and her only problem is to unfold her resources on her own proper soil, and by the activity of her heavenly life, assimilate all that live to the person of her Redeemer. She is not a crusader because she endeavors to fill her own domain. The very endeavor, *if actuated by spiritual life*, is in the nature *of growth*.

At the same time, it must not be withheld, that the great law of Christian advancement we are asserting, is of a nature to suggest some uncomfortable, though, we trust, salutary suspicions, in regard to our present movements for evangelizing the world. The church cannot be too fully aware that this new era of missions portends some serious result. If it is begun and actuated by true apostolic piety, it will triumph. This we verily believe, though in spite of many discouraging symptoms that fill us with uneasiness and profound anxiety. If it be otherwise—if the work is begun by a mere sally of impulse, and prosecuted only as a dull mechanical labor, apart from any real union to God, and without any sober apprehension of its agreement with his heavenly designs—not only will it fall to nothing, but the churches engaged will either be prostrated or effectually revolutionized. The old vegetable, or rather mineral habit of the church, which preceded these efforts, is already broken up. Piety has now become more nearly, perhaps too nearly, synonymous with action. In our endeavor to persuade ourselves that we exist only for the accomplishment of benevolent works, we have at least learned to shape all our views of God and divine government by this principle. Theological changes, extensively imputed to other causes, have been really due, in the remoter sense, to a change in the practical habit of Christian life. If now our missionary enterprises fall to nothing, where will they leave us? We have swung our anchor, and the quiet narrow bay that lies sheltered between original sin and divine efficiency, headed by Mount Predestination, is already so far behind us, that only the top of said mountain is visible. We can lie there on deck, basking in the sun, no more; that day is over. Our practical and theological habits are already changed, and if changed by efforts that must fail because there is too little of spiritual life in them to suffer their success, what shall

be the result? Some new era of darkness, doubtless, analogous to that which an alliance of the church with philosophy and the civil state and mechanical forms produced—a dark of age of Protestantism. And what more appropriate or likely, than that our speculations concerning God's benevolence, separated, by a failure of our plans, from all vital benevolence in ourselves, should bring us to our theologic and moral level, in that sea of water-gruel philanthropy, sometimes called Universalism.

Furthermore, is it not an appalling fact, that while the church of God has been launching forth into undertakings so vast and holy, it has, at the same time, manifested so little corresponding growth in spirituality and faith in the Redeemer. How many of those who contribute to missions, and perhaps even bountifully, do it only as paying a church rental to the kingdom of heaven, without any earnest, prayerful desire for the Redeemer's triumph. How few practically live for this object? In how few minds is the power of the world practically relaxed? In how many Christian bosoms has this work of missions lost all impulse, save that of mere engagement itself, and degenerated into flat formality? We have great societies on foot to prosecute and direct these undertakings. They were founded, we believe, in a spirit of faith. The new desire to propagate the gospel, in which they sprung, we believe was kindled from above. The blessing of God has visibly rested on their plans. But how manifest is it that these societies become mere dead machines outside of the church, unless they are filled and penetrated, through and through, by the life of the Christian body? A mere society engine, fed by money, is as truly external to the church, as the Parliament of England or the Germanic Diet; and it is an instrument as irrelevant to the extension of the church, as any of the human expedients by which it has hitherto *been corrupted*. How often too, and how earnestly, do the

conductors of these societies testify the anxiety they feel, lest the inconstancy experienced in the flow of their resources, may indicate the fact that they flow from no settled principle of love to the cause engaged in? Nor is it an auspicious sign, if the church, as we often hear, has reached her highest point or maximum, in the scale of her contributions. This apparent fact may be due to commercial causes. If not, the sign is a bad one. It indicates a want of spiritual life; for life will never suffer a stand. Its very instinct is growth and extension. To be stationary, is to die.

Is there not also much of very idle declamation on the subject of the press? As if God would offer to man a mechanical engine for converting the world with the least possible expenditure of piety; or as if types of lead and sheets of paper may be the light of the world. The press is a new tongue given to the church. But if she talks more, she must for that reason live more; for talk, without the life to give it power and unction, degenerates into empty noise and clatter. The press, therefore, in order not to be another external instrument, as mischievous as state patronage or the mechanical forms of prelacy, must be attended in the church by extraordinary gifts of holiness and self-denial, and worked, if we may so express it, by spiritual life. To hang any, the least expectation on the press, as a substitute for piety, or a piety-saving machine, is an egregious delusion.

We offer these suggestions, not to create discouragement, but to show the scope and spirit of our doctrine. It is much that we find nothing wrong in our objects, or in the means devised for their attainment. They only cease to come within the principle of growth, by a deficiency of vital piety and faith in God—a deficiency that unmakes or vitiates every thing, even the sacrifices of God's altar. And is it not time for the church to receive this lesson, to

assure herself in every member, that if she extends her domain, she must grow, and that if she grows she must live? Is it not time for the ministers of religion to preach despair and a curse to all dead charities—to tell their flocks that this gift of power cannot be bought with money, that the church is in jeopardy through her very efforts, and that all attempts to push her forward without piety or beyond it, must end in disaster?

Some persons may be apprehensive that the spirit of our doctrine of internal growth, is adverse to all suitable efforts to secure the conversion of those who are without. Rather is it the only sound law of such efforts. If they may not be actuated by a vital Christian love, or if they expect to prevail by other influences than those of Christian truth, they ought to be withheld. No one can doubt that instruments of bribery or torture, to gain men to Christ, are external to the church, and essentially spurious. There are other instruments that are not more to be commended. If a great scene must be compassed; if a preacher who is noted as having a wondrous faculty to convert men must be sent for as indispensable; if a mill of mechanism must be planned, it would not seem that the church, as a living embodiment of God's truth and Spirit, has much to do with the contrivance in any way. So of all efforts to bring men to Christ by means and instruments not included in Christian truth and the persuasive power of holy living. So, again, if the whole attention of the church is bent to this one object of making conversions, and there is no endeavor to cherish them after they are made; if nothing is valued but conversions, and these are taken as the measure of all good; if revivals of religion are sought, not for the reviving of piety, but simply and only for the subjugation of the unbelievers; then is it clear, *that* the idea of growth is lost in the idea of conquest. It *is not* spiritual life that prompts such efforts; for, if it had

its presence in them, it would also move the Christian body in its inward experiences and struggles, and make it something to have graces and attainments of its own. Rather must we judge, in such cases, that the church wants some easier work than to grow herself unto God, and prefers rather to see a prodigious slaughter among them that are called sinners. Furthermore, in these scenes of mere conquest, there are commonly found too many signs of a ferocious and fanatical spirit, to suffer the the conviction that spiritual life, with its holy calm, its peaceful elevation, its genial affections, actuates the movement. We seem to look, not upon the burning bush where Jehovah dwells, but on a mere human conflagration, roasting and consuming all whom it reaches. Contrary to all this, when simple love to God is breathed out in love to men, and all efforts to convert those without receive a strenuous and persuasive character from the fervor of this Christian love, the object here is not conquest, but assimilation, which is itself a function of growth. Or, if we call it conquest, it is such only in that milder and more figurative sense, which consists with a true Christian zeal. This is that conflagration which reveals the true presence of God, which burns and consumes not!

Our doctrine of growth excludes all efforts to reform the world by the mere force of public opinion. How many Christian reformers, for the want, shall we say, of a living piety and a confidence in truth, fly to the help of public opinion, as a shorter method, and one that lies within their range. Public opinion is their argument; to array public opinion against the practices they combat, their chief hope, and the main effort of their industry. I do not doubt the use of public opinion, in its place, or the validity of its power. But if it were possible to make public opinion the law and sanction of virtue, how does it appear that an alliance of church and state is any more adverse to the purity of the

Gospel, than an alliance of the church with public opinion, or a submission of the church and of God's laws to its patronage? And why may not the moral duties of life as well be enforced by the sword, as by public opinion? No instrument of moral reform, surely, can be more essentially external to the church, or foreign to its spirit, than the public opinion of the world. In the same view, all reliance on the progress of society, as being in itself a ground of hope to the cause of Christ, is vicious and deceptive, except as God is supposed to be Himself the directing law of society.

By these illustrations, the spirit of our principle is sufficiently displayed. It forbids all substitutes for piety, and all hope of success without or apart from piety. It requires every activity to proceed from within. It commands the church, first of all, to live—demands of every Christian, who will add strength to the cause of Christ in the world, that he contribute, first of all, a holy life. It declares that bustle cannot save the world, represses all flippant zeal and forwardness, distinguishes the money-giver from the Christian, and warns the church that she is about to perish by the magnitude of her schemes, if she cannot sustain them by a proportional measure of holiness and faith in God.

But we need to see the power and the animating grandeur of our principle, as well as its spirit and its lines of application. When we say that the church is to have her extension by a law of growth, it is supposed that she has within herself certain prolific resources waiting for their development. It is with her as with a nation. As then we might show a foreigner the resources of future grandeur possessed by our republic, in our climate, our soil, our mines and forests, our rivers and ports, our constitutions and laws, our schools, the spirit of our people, the health and vigor of our stock; so, in like manner, we may lay

open the resources of the church—the heavenly nation—and show its capacity to fill and sway the world.

To begin with those least spiritual, there is, in the church, we affirm, a much greater capacity to generate wealth, than there is in the world external to the church. True piety is itself a principle of industry and application to business. It subordinates, according to its measure, the love of show and all the tendencies to extravagance. It rules out those licentious passions that war with order and economy, and hurry so many thousands into profligacy. It excludes those vices which prey upon the health and substance of their victims. It moderates that exceeding haste to be rich, by which so many overreach themselves, and even make shipwreck of their character. Piety is itself a basis of credit, and credit is capital. Transplant a Christian church into the wilderness, without money or resources, other than what they have in their own persons, and it will not be long before you shall see them in a condition of comfort, and displaying all the ordinary tokens of substantial opulence. A band of adventurers, thrown together in the same place, would soon be involved in scenes of violence and disorder; and, having no industry or laws to secure the rights and gains of industry, would probably perish. Nor is this a mere theoretical opinion, or one that we draw from our fancy. The history of our own New England yields the same lesson. Whence comes it, that upon her rocky and stubborn soil, under harsh and frowning skies, we behold so much of high prosperity and substantial wealth—so much of physical well-being and ornament? The fact is attributed, by some, to our sharpness and parsimony. But the real sharpness of which we hear is in the church of God, which has cast the habits of our people, made them patient in their industry, given them character and credit, cut off profligacy and profusion, sent up its warmth into the frigid skies, and won from Him who is

throned above them, smiles of plenty, more genial than our niggardly climate seemed to offer. And, as to the parsimony, it is enough to ask, in what part of the world, only equal in ability, so much is given, with so free a spirit, to every rational object of public beneficence and Christian charity? There are then mines in the church of God that can never fail. A law of production is discovered, under her divine economy, which pertains no where else; and it is clearly seen that she can never want *resources* for any undertaking it is in her heart to attempt. The wealth of the world runs towards her, by a fixed ordinance of heaven. Wealth too is power. So that she is set on high, by her piety, to work her beneficent will, and extend her holy principles, by means of that which her principles have created, till she has both enriched and regenerated the world.

The same general principles and habits that secure a more rapid development of wealth, make it also sure, that more of personal talent will be unfolded in the church than out of it. Furthermore, Christian piety is the friend of mental liberty and of education. The very principles of religion, too, require every man to educate himself as long as he lives—to make his ten talents twenty; his five, ten. He cannot discharge himself to Christ, except as he multiplies his abilities. It will also be found, that Christian families abound with influences specially favorable to the awakening of the intellectual principle in childhood. Religion itself is thoughtful. It carries the child's mind over directly to unknown worlds, fills the understanding with the sublimest questions, and sends the imagination abroad to occupy itself where angel's wings would tire. The child of a Christian family is thus unsensed, at the earliest moment, and put into mental action: this, too, under the healthy and genial influence of Christian principle. Nor should we omit to notice how the soul of every dis-

ciple is, of necessity, exalted and empowered by union to God. Here he begins to partake the elevation of an angelic nature. All that is neglectful, low, passionate and brutish, in his make, is refined away. His judgment is clarified, his reason put in harmony with truth, his emotions purified and increased in volume, his imagination fired by the objects of faith and hope. There is, in short, more of talent in a man, more capacity to think high thoughts and burn with great emotions, simply for being brought unto God. Nor would it be difficult to show, by a comparison of Christendom with the other parts of the world, and the more spiritual parts of Christendom with those that are less, that the church, as a fact, has unfolded more of talent than the world external to it, and more in proportion to its spirituality. The church is God's university, and it lies in her foundation, as a school of spiritual life, to energize all capacity, and make her sons a talented and powerful race. And talent is the greatest of all merely human gifts. A great man has more of power over the world than a great army. He can march through obstacles that no army can force. If then we find that the church of God has it in her nature to unfold double the talent unfolded without—to produce, out of a given number of persons, a twofold proportion of able and great men—it requires no special power in arithmetic to make it clear, that she has such an advantage over the world as to make her ultimate triumph certain.

We find a third resource of the church in the fact that she has, within herself, as a spiritual nation, a peculiar and distinct law of spiritual population. We verily believe that it is the plan of God, in the household covenant, to bring the law of family increase directly into the church, and make it also a law of spiritual increase. Though we are painfully aware, that the views of this covenant and of Christian education, current in the church, have no practical

agreement with our own. Indeed, if we advance our subject by this head, we not only need to cite, but to make the material of our argument, by first revolutionizing that unbelief or misbelief, through which, as it seems to us, the opinions of the church, in reference to Christian childhood, are so injuriously pre-occupied. This we cannot do, by any discussion within our present compass. And, therefore, we will only state or suggest our views of the subject, leaving it to our readers to weigh our suggestions by themselves.

We reject the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as held by Episcopalians; first, because it makes nothing of faith in the parents, thrusting them away by the interposition of sponsors, and assuming that the priest may take any child, and translate him at once into the kingdom of heaven by his own act; secondly, because there is no evidence that any child is or can be spiritually regenerated, in the moment of baptism, and by virtue of that ordinance. In place of a doctrine so false and pernicious, we hold that children are, in a sense, included in the faith of their parents, partakers with them in their covenant, and brought into a peculiar relation to God, in virtue of it. On this ground, they receive a common seal of faith with them, in their baptism; and God, on his part, contemplates, in the rite, the fact that they are to grow up as Christians, or spiritually renewed persons. As to the precise time or manner in which they are to receive the germ of holy principle, nothing is affirmed; only it is understood, that God includes their infant age in the womb of parental culture, and pledges himself to them and their parents, in such a way, as to offer the presumption that they may grow up in love with all goodness, and remember no definite time when they became subjects of Christian principle. Christian education is, then, to conform to this view, *and nothing* is to be called Christian education which does

not. As Baxter, who was long perplexed with suspicions that his piety was only his education, because he could remember no time when he began to be exercised with right feeling, removed his difficulty by the happy discovery, "that education is an ordinary way for the conveyance of God's grace, and ought no more to be set in opposition to the Spirit, than the preaching of the word."

We think it is no objection to this view, that the children of Christian families so often grow up in sin, and die in manifest impenitence. For it is nothing new that Christians fail of their duty, and cast away their privilege. At the same time, we may safely enough indulge the suspicion, that a large share of those who seem to be renewed at a later period of life, only experience a resuscitation of that holy principle which was planted in their childhood; for if a child only receives the law of the house as good and right, it is difficult to conceive that it does not involve the germ of a right character. The Moravians, too, have very nearly realized our doctrine. As many as nine out of ten in that most interesting church, we are assured, have no conception of a time when they entered on a Christian life. Besides, the practical disbelief of our doctrine is itself a good and sufficient reason why our Christian families do not realize its results. It vitiates the whole spirit and aim of their education. It leads them even to discourage every ingenuous effort of holy virtue in childhood. They take their own children to be aliens, even under the covenant—train them up *to be* aliens, and even tell them that they can do nothing right or acceptable to God till *after* their hearts are changed; or, what is the same, till after they have come to some advanced age. They are thus discouraged, and even *taught* to grow up in sin; which, if they fail to do, it is because a bad education is not able to accomplish its legitimate results.

Nor is our view any infringement upon the doctrine of

depravity, in whatsoever manner it may be held. It only declares that depravity is best rectified when it is weakest, and before it is stiffened into habit.

Neither does it infringe at all upon the doctrine, that spiritual agency is the operative cause of Christian piety. Whatsoever the parent does for his child, is to have its effect by a divine influence. And it is the pledge of this which lies at the basis of the household covenant, and constitutes its power.

As little does it falsify the oft-repeated text, which declares that all are not Israel who are of Israel. This declares a fact, and the fact is, alas! too true. Or, if it be supposed to speak of an electing purpose of God, God has no such purpose, irrespective of means and conditions; and the question is still open, whether parental misbelief and a failure of duty are not the reasons why the offspring of Israel are aliens.

On the other hand, it is the express direction of God, that children should be trained up in the way that they should go—not that they should be trained up in the wrong way, which afterwards they are to repent of and forsake. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, not in evil and graceless impenitence. Faith too is to be an heir-loom in the family, and descend upon the child; the faith that dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and in his mother Eunice, is last of all to be in him also.

This view, too, is the only one that gives household baptism any meaning, or any real place in the Christian system. We admit, in words, that baptism introduces the child to membership of some kind in the church; but we see no place for him there, any more than for a vegetable. We thus stand for a rite that is insignificant, or even absurd. Or, if we call it the dedication of the child, the child is only dedicated to our own unbelief, not to the *grace of* God; for we do not really suppose that the grace

of God can have any thing to do with it, till after it is of an age to dedicate itself. Is it not more reasonable to receive the rite as a seal of faith, a token of spiritual renovation—understanding that God has graciously included him in the covenant with us, given us the helm of his moral existence, authorized us to ask a rite for him before he is of an age to ask it for himself, and empowered us, by virtue of His own co-operation, so to guide him that, when we give him over the helm, we shall give it to him as a Christian youth? This is Christian education; not the Baptist scheme of individualism, which conceives it to be absurd for the parent to work any thing spiritual in his child's infancy, lest he should not believe for himself; which tells the church that after she has given existence, and the egg of immortality is produced, her motherly duty is, to copy the instinct of the Nubian ostrich, and leave it hidden in the sand!

If, too, our view is false, or the current opinion is true, how miserable is the age of childhood! If it may not grow up in holy virtue—if it must grow up in sin, till it comes to some definite age, before it is a candidate for repentance and a new life—then, during that interval, is it seen to lie under a doom more dismal and hapless than any other we are acquainted with in this world. Capable of sin—incapable of repentance! This too of an age most amiable and lovely, and nearest to innocence! Might not the church better say, in her Saviour's name, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," and clasp it to her arms?

If our views on this head are admitted—if it is God's design in the household covenant, that children shall grow up to be Christians, and this result may and ought to be realized—then, most clearly, is it seen that there is a law of *spiritual population* in the church, analogous to the law of physical population in states. This we verily believe, and we consider it to be one of the mightiest elements of

growth and power in the grand economy of the church; for it is demonstrable, that by virtue of this simple element of internal growth, the church of Christ will soon fill the world. As the Saxon race, when they came to these western shores, *lived down* the native inhabitants, and rolled the tide of population over them, so, if the church were fulfilling the design of God in the household covenant, and training up the generations of her children in piety, she would, by this simple law of internal increase, and without a single conversion from without, overlive the world, and make it her own. For it will be observed, that a large proportion of the world without are continually perishing by vice and extravagance; and when they do not perish themselves, are entailing the effects of their profligacy on the diseased and half-endowed constitution of their families. This is not true in the families of the church. Habits of holy virtue, too, as we have already shown, would secure the means of living in greater abundance, and thus make the Christian families, on the average, more vigorous and healthy. And thus, by a stronger law of increase, the church must, at some day, more or less distant, over-multiply the world, and take possession of the whole planet. What but this is the promise of the covenant itself: "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed?" The family of Abraham was identical with the church, and the promise is, that it *shall* over-populate and fill the world.

A fourth resource of the church, lies in her capacity to unfold more of character than the world without. We here speak of character, not in its most internal sense, or as related to God, but of character as a power over men, *to influence* their feeling and command their homage.

Christian character, in this view of it, is that which, by principle and worth, and beauty of feeling in one man, approves itself to another, and becomes a controlling and assimilative power over him. It is no easy thing to beget, in minds not brought up in society, even a sense of character. The million live and die without once conceiving it. But no man, however dull or rude, can become a Christian without, at least, having some conception of character awakened. He must know himself and God, and himself as morally related to the moral goodness and excellence of God. He cannot smite upon his breast, like the publican, without a painful discovery of himself to prompt it; nor without so much as daring to lift his eyes to heaven, can he cry, with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" and not have felt, in some degree, the greatness and purity of God. Behold a vile, brutish person, bowed in tears, and trembling with inward horror, before the tremendous majesty and glory of God! Some elementary notion of character is there descending upon him, in that shuddering before Jehovah; it is the sense of character that makes him shudder. And how can a life be spent in holy communion with God, the infinitely perfect—how modeled after Christ, the only perfect life ever displayed in humanity—without attaining to a nicer and more heavenly sense of character, and receiving its impress? The principles of religion, too—truth, justice, rectitude, benevolence—are all such as need to lie at the basis of a good and great character. The feelings and manners of Christian piety—courtesy, gentleness, condescension, pity, gratitude, forgiveness, charity—are all such as cannot be dispensed with, in the construction of a worthy and beautiful character. Then consider the whole discipline of a Christian life, as a perpetual exercise in character. No sooner does one become a disciple, than he is put upon it, as a study, how to honor his calling; to be neither too

much nor too little; to be just, and yet merciful; to be charitable, and yet judicious; when to resist enemies, and when to suffer them; to be cheerful, without being light; serious, yet not morose; when to argue, and when to be silent; when to forgive, and when to bring to justice; when to feel, and when to reason; to have high emotions, and not be a framist; to be independent, without obstinacy; to believe, without credulity; to have high experiences, without advertising closet transactions; to have a speech seasoned with salt, yet clear of cant; to be united to God, and not disunited from man. How can a disciple be drilled in such exercises, all his life long, without becoming more or less expert in discriminating character in himself and others?

The church is then to her disciples a perpetual school of character. We by no means affirm that all who take the Christian name become examples of moral excellence and beauty. Many seem never to have a thought about character, after they have once become satisfied of their conversion. We say of such, when they die, perhaps, that in the judgment of charity they were Christians, and truly our charity covers a multitude of sins. At the same time, there are unfolded in the church innumerable examples of character from all the walks of life, such as cannot be found elsewhere—examples which dignify eminence and power, cause obscurity to shine, and make adversity smile—the gentle, the pure, the good, the upright, the firm, the heroic, the holy.

And how great a power is character! Out of God's own person and his truth, there is no other so mighty and persuasive. It is that eloquence which man least knows how to resist. It provokes no resistance. Being itself only truth in life, it suffers no answer. If the beholder turns away to escape the homage he feels, its image still goes with him, to reprove his evil deeds, and call him every *hour to God.*

Truth is another of the resources of the church, a power that God has deposited in her bosom to be developed there. Having the Christian Scriptures, she may therefore boldly say, what is denied to all the schools of philosophy, that she has the truth of God. Hence it comes to pass that, while they are ever displacing each other, and after their short day of splendor is over, retiring into oblivion, the church still holds her place, gathers new strength from every assault, and stands erect as the pillar and ground of the truth. The great masters of philosophy and champions of infidelity die, by turns, into glimmer and darkness; but Christ the Messiah is the sun of righteousness, rolling up into noon and the fullness of day. Already has it been proved, by an experience of eighteen hundred years, that the church's truth is invincible. It speaks to man, and its words have their own evidence in them. If reason reels away from its mysteries, reason yet returns dissatisfied without them. If human wisdom invents a better God, and a government more according to its mind, human wisdom is soon frozen by its own meager truth, and returns to Christ for warmth. Such is the Christian truth: the virtues it teaches so excellent, the hopes it offers so definite and so consonant to human wants—it brings God so near, and displays the divine feeling so attractively—it paints human character so truly, and offers a remedy so adequate—that if spurned or rejected, it will yet be sought.

We do not say that all the points of Christian doctrine are settled, or that nothing remains to be done to unfold their relations, and set them forth in the harmony of their reasons. Neither do we say that there is no disagreement about the essential truths of the Christian scheme. That were to maintain that its victory is already complete. We only say that God's everlasting truth is now in the bosom of the church. There is a process going on, too, in the church, from age to age, whereby her views of the Chris-

tian plan are being filled up, rectified, and systematized in their reasons. She is instructing herself also by her own lapses and apostasies. Almost all the possible errors she has invented and tried out. Those bold extravagancies of human learning, now so prevalent, and by which so many are, perhaps, unduly frightened, are among the last, and, we trust, not least fruitful efforts of aberration. Taken in the large view, she is, in all these, only making her experiments to settle the truth, unmasking her artillery, drawing it forth into ranks and orders, and preparing by her lines of battle encircling the globe, to complete her warfare against unbelief, by a universal and sweeping defeat.

But the greatest of all resources possessed by the church, to be developed by growth, is drawn from her internal union with, and participation of, the divine nature—greater than either wealth, talent, internal population, character, or truth—greater than all together, and that, because it includes them all. The church of God is a habitation of the Spirit, the body itself of Christ, and so the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Let it not be deemed an irreverence, if we speak of a progressive development of this *divine* element in the church.

The piety of the church is itself such. The life of Christian piety is the life of God; its growth a development of that life. When the holy life begins, in a renewed mind, whether infant or adult, it is only a capacity or seed of future growth; that growth but a fuller participation of the divine nature, in its power, goodness, and beauty. The same is true of the church in its collective capacity. The amount of her existence is measured, not by her numbers or the noise she makes, but by her participation of the life of God. According to her measure in this, is she clear in understanding, benevolent in emotion, self-denying in action, patient in suffering, powerful in example. Additions of *grace* are indispensable to all increments of power. A

small root cannot support a large tree. An army of spiritual invalids cannot vanquish the world. Union to God is the soul and success of all good efforts. Without this, we only drag the church on painfully after us, as if it were an idol-car, by the pull of many hands. But if we are filled with holy piety, and earnest practical love to the cause of salvation, then the church has liberty and inspiration, becomes itself a creature of life, like the wheels of Ezekiel, because the spirit of the living creatures is in it.

There is also another aspect to this growth of piety. Not only does the internal life of the tree extend its reach, but the outward bulk manifests the fact. The church, in like manner, is to the world's eye a development of God. Being the body of Christ, she is, in some sense, though not in the sense of Mr. Brownson and the Papists, a perpetual Christ in the earth—in the sense, we mean, not of her political organization, but of her practical or internal spirit. By this she becomes the light of the world, as her Saviour was—a perpetual manifestation of the Spirit, or, what is the same, of the Divine Nature. This too is the main source of her power over the world. It is not because she runs to and fro, because she strives and cries, but because she lives a life above nature: herein lies her capacity of impression. Without saying, "This is God," the world is moved as by the presence and power of God. Her Christ-like graces of love, purity, truth, and beneficence, are a divine atmosphere about her, and her atmosphere enters the breath and the blood, while her arguments only play about the head. To approach her, is to be convinced of sin, righteousness, and a judgment to come. To be thus, in her Christian growth, a demonstration of the Spirit, to have the divine nature flowing out thus impalpably but really on the world, gives her an *assimilative power* in the nature of vitality. So that if she gains a convert, whether at home, or in the ends of the earth, (for place is nothing,) it is not

by external conquest, but by virtue of her own internal life—the life of God.

Furthermore, there is, we apprehend, a certain fixed relation between those exertions of spiritual influence which are immediate, and those which flow mediately through the church; else why has not the Spirit left the church behind, and poured itself, as a rushing mighty wind, into the bosom of a whole world in a day? There needed to be an objective influence, as well as one internal; else the subject of the Spirit would not know or guess to what his internal motions are attributable, and might deem them only nervous or hysteric effects, or possibly, if a heathen, the work of some enchanter or demon. But the objective influence of a holy life, coupled with holy teachings *from the church*, starts the contemplative powers, occupies the knowing principle, explains the *immediate* influence and its object, offers to view, in its own holy exercises the molds of exercises to be wrought in the observer, and, by its own assimilative and persuasive sympathies, gives to the new feeling in him its own heavenly type and form. If we are right in this view—if there is a fixed relation between the mediate and immediate influences of the Spirit—such that one measures the other, (and we could urge many additional reasons for the opinion,) then are we brought fairly out upon the sublime conclusion, that the growth or progress of Christian piety in the church, if it shall take place, offers the expectation of a correspondent progress in the development of those spiritual influences that are immediate. The mediate and immediate are both identical at the root. If therefore the church unfolds her piety as a divine life, which is one, the divine life will display its activity as much more potently and victoriously without, which is the other. And as the kingdom of heaven, which was first as a grain of mustard-seed, advances in the last days towards the stature *of a tree*, the more it may advance; for the Holy Spirit

will pour himself into the world, as much more intensely and profusely. Grant us, O God! that we may not disappoint ourselves of a hope so glorious, by attempts to extend thy church without that holy growth of piety on which our success depends! Pour thyself in thy fullness, and as a gale of purity, into our bosom! Expel all schemes that are not begun in Thee! Let there be good desires in us, that our works may be truly good! And that Thou mayest do thy will in the earth, do it in us perfectly!

We offer these thoughts to the public, not without having duly considered their import. We commend them to the special regard of all thoughtful Christians. Do we not give utterance to a great and salutary truth—one that ought to preside over all Christian plans and efforts—one that is a necessary guard against all Christian dissipation, and one that is specially needed in this day, to stimulate that measure of piety which our undertakings pre-suppose and require? If what we have said throws a heavy shade of discouragement over all dead works and formal charities, can it be too heavy? At the same time, could we offer a truth that is more cheering to all that is worthy of encouragement?

It would be well if we might recur, in closing, to all the points presented in our enumeration of the resources of growth in the church, and rectify some deficiencies and errors that are frequently noticeable in regard to them. We hope we have left an impression that more piety, a closer and more practical union to God, is indispensable. If we might speak of the talents of the church, we would say, read the parable of the talents. It is the duty of every Christian, as he hopes to be accepted of his Judge, to take his mind out of the napkin, to double all his powers by cultivation—a duty that is grievously neglected, and one most intimately connected with the triumph of the Gospel.

There is a great and lamentable deficiency of what we have called character. We have much to say (not too much) of the heart, the internal principle of religion, and the state of the disciple, as related to God. But we either say too little, or what we say has far too little effect, of those charities, those duties of society, of good neighborhood and good citizenship, in which human life is spent—the kind and graceful feelings, honesty, mercy, generosity—every thing that is necessary to outward dignity and beauty—in one word, character. Many Christians seem never to attain to a proper sense of character. Indeed, the attainment is a somewhat difficult one, to those who have not been trained to it, in their early education. The church suffers an immense loss of weight and influence from this source. Those who are called Unitarian Christians, it will be observed, on the other hand, have much to say of character, and less of the distinguishing principle of piety, as internal. Nor is what they say without effect. If they encourage or leave room for the error of supposing that the substance of piety is made up of those individual acts, which are properly only so many manifestations of it, and not of internal principle as related to God, they do at least secure, in many cases, acts and manifestations that extort praise and respect. We have sometimes thought, that if a practical Unitarian and an orthodox disciple could be melted into one, they would make a Christian. This at least will do to illustrate our meaning. There needs to be more done for character—to produce a sense of character, what it is, what is necessary to it, and why it is necessary. A rude, graceless piety, a zeal that hurries by things that are of good report is needlessly odious. If it be a well-tempered, it is yet an awkward instrument, wherewith to convert the world. Should not the preachers of Christ have more to do with his external life, which is itself the model of Christian beauty and goodness? Might they not often instruct

themselves as well as their people, by this model of character? If they had a nicer sense of character themselves, might it not add much to the dignity and power of their ministry, as well as to their personal acceptableness?—moderating austerity, softening hardness, expanding contractedness, making the unworldly spirit amiable, assisting them to be accessible with dignity, and dignified without distance, and preparing them to be pastors, not drivers of their flocks—or, in failure of that, driven by them.

In regard to family training, we have more to say. We have spoken of the immense resources, the fertile capacity of internal growth possessed by the church in her children, if trained up in piety, according to the intent of the household covenant. By the prevalent misconception of this covenant, and of Christian education under it, we suffer manifold and grievous mischiefs. First of all, we lose our children, which is too great a loss. Next, what is scarcely less deplorable, we pervert the style and habit of our piety.

One principal reason why we are so often deficient in character, or outward beauty, is, that piety begins so late in life, having thus to maintain a perpetual and unequal war with previous habit. If it was not true of Paul, it is yet too generally true, that one born out of due time will be found out of due time, more often than he should be afterwards—unequal, inconsistent with himself, acting the old man instead of the new. Having the old habit to war with, it is often too strong for him. To make a graceful and complete Christian character, it needs itself to be the habit of existence;—not a grape grafted on a bramble. And this, it will be seen, requires a Christian childhood in the subject. Having this, the gracious or supernatural character becomes itself more nearly natural, and possesses the peculiar charm of naturalness, which is necessary to the highest moral beauty.

It results also from our mistaken views of Christian

training, that we fall into a notion of religion that is mechanical. We thrust our children out of the covenant first, and insist, in spite of it, that they shall grow up in the same spiritual state as if their father and mother were heathens. Then we go out, at least on certain occasions, to convert them back, as if they actually were heathens. Our only idea of increase is of that which accrues by means of a certain abrupt technical experience. Led away thus from all thought of internal growth in the church, efforts to secure conversions take an external character, which is not proper to them. Accretion displaces growth. The church is gathered as a foundling hospital, and lest it should not be so, its own children are reduced to foundlings. Immediate repentance proclaimed, insisted on, and realized in an abrupt change, proper only to those who are indeed aliens and enemies, is the only hope or inlet of the church. We cannot understand how the spiritual nation should grow and populate, and become powerful within itself;—nothing will serve but the immediate annexation of Texas!

Piety becomes inconstant, and revivals of religion take an exaggerated character from the same causes. If all Christian success is measured by the count of technical conversions from without, then it follows that nothing is done when conversions cease to be counted. The harvest closes not with feasting, but with famine. Despair cuts off Christian motive. The tide is spent; let us anchor during the ebb. It is well indeed to live very piously in the families; still, there is nothing depending on it. The children will be good subjects enough for conversion without. The piety of the church is thus made to be desultory and irregular by system. The idea of conquest displaces the idea of growth. Whereas, if it were understood that Christian education, or training in the families, is to be itself a process of domestic conversion, that as a child weeps under *a frown and smiles* at the command of a smile, so spiritual

influences may be streaming into his being from the handling of the nursery and the whole manner and temperament of the house, producing what will ever after be fundamental impressions of his being; then the hearth, the table, the society and affections of the house, would all feel the presence of a practical religious motive. The homes would be Christian homes, and life itself a stream of genial piety.

Here too is the greatest impediment to a true missionary spirit. The habit of conquest runs to dissipation and irregularity. It is as if a nation, forgetting its own internal resources, were scouring the seas, and trooping up and down the world, in pursuit of prize-money and plunder, forsaking the loom and the plow, and all the regular growths of industry. Whereas, if the church were unfolding the riches of the covenant at her firesides and tables—if the children were identified with religion from the first, and grew up in a Christian love of man, the missionary spirit would not throw itself up in irregular jets, but would flow as a river. And so much is there in this, that we do not believe it possible to produce a steady, patient, practical spirit of missions, except through the education of childhood.

We ask it then of every parent, that he will seriously review his impressions on this subject. Let him study the ductility of childhood to parental influence, and observe how easily religious impressions are made, and all the prejudices of the soul turned on the side of religion. Let him try the conjecture, how far God has made, or will, by his presence, make what is lovingly exhibited in his own life, communicable or translatable to the childish mind. Dropping the idea of a technical experience, as proper to older persons, let him see how far, by the divine aid, really good and right dispositions toward God and man may be called into *exercise*. And if he has hitherto considered

Christian education to be synonymous with lecturing and reproof, let him consider the text, Fathers provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged. Let family religion be a domestic miniature of heaven—not a dull formality. Let him be there as the gardener among his opening flowers, expecting their fragrance and beauty, not that they will all be thistles—expecting it, because God hath promised, and the dews of his grace are perpetually felt.

But we must not leave our subject in words of reproof and correction. The truth we have endeavored to set forth, is one of high promise to the church. To see its whole import at a glance, imagine the church of God to be a spiritual nation, founded or begun by a Colony descended from the skies. It alights upon our globe as its chartered territory. Can this Spiritual Colony spread itself over the whole territory of the planet, and absorb all the human races in its dominion? You find that it can unfold more of wealth and talent, by far, than the present living races of inhabitants. It has within itself a stronger law of population, as well as a mighty power to win over and assimilate the nations. Its people have more beauty and weight of character, to exalt their predominance. They have great truths for their armor of assault and defense, which the world cannot match or parry, and the superior wisdom of which they must ultimately yield to. And what is more than all, they are found to be all partakers of the DIVINE NATURE, which they have brought down with them, to be unfolded in their history and make it powerful. Having in itself elements of power and precedence like these, not to believe that the Heavenly Colony will finally overspread and fill the world, is to deny causes their effects, and pronounce a sentence of futility on the laws of nature themselves. God too has testified in regard to this branch of his planting—THEY SHALL INHERIT THE LAND.

THE

ORGANIC UNITY OF THE FAMILY.

The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.—*Jer.* vii. 18.

In this lively picture, you have the illustration of a great and momentous truth—*the Organic Unity of the Family.* If it be an idolatrous family, worshippers of the moon, for example, such is the organic relation of the members, that they are all involved together, and the idol worship is the common act of the house. The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, the women prepare the cakes for an offering, and the queen of heaven receives it, as one that is the joint product of the whole family. The worship is family worship; the god of one is the god of all; the spirit of one, the spirit of all.

And so it is with all family transactions and feelings. They implicate ordinarily the whole circle of the house, young and old, male and female, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. They act together, take a common character, accept the same delusions, practice the same sins, and ought, I believe, to be sanctified by a common grace.

This most serious truth is one that is exceedingly remote from the present age, and from no part of the Christian world more remote than from us. All our modern notions and speculations have taken a bent towards individualism.

In the state, we have been engaged to bring out the civil rights of the individual, asserting his proper liberties as a person, and vindicating his conscience, as a subject of God, from the constraints of force. In matters of religion, we have burst the bonds of church authority, and erected the individual mind into a tribunal of judgment within itself; we have asserted free will as the ground of all proper responsibility, and framed our theories of religion so as to justify the incommunicable nature of persons as distinct units. While thus engaged, we have well nigh lost, as was to be expected, the idea of organic powers and relations. The state, the church, the family, have ceased to be regarded as such, according to their proper idea, and become mere collections of units. A national life, a church life, a family life, is no longer conceived, or perhaps conceivable, by many. Instead of being wrought together and penetrated, to some extent, by historic laws and forces, common to all the members, we only seem to lie as seeds piled together, without any terms of connection, save the accident of proximity, or the fact that we all belong to the heap. And thus the three great forms of organic existence, which God has appointed for the race, are in fact lost out of mental recognition. The conception is so far gone that, when the fact of such an organic relation is asserted, our enlightened public will stare at the strange conceit, and wonder what can be meant by a paradox so absurd.

My design, at the present time, is to restore, if possible, the conception of one of these organic forms, viz: the family. For though we have gained immense advantages, in a civil, ecclesiastical, and religious point of view, by our modern development of individualism, we have yet run ourselves into many hurtful misapprehensions on all these subjects, which, if they are not rectified, will assuredly *bring disastrous* consequences. And no where conse-

quences more disastrous than in the family, where they are already apparent, though not fully matured; for the very change of view, by which we have cleared individual responsibility, in our discussion of free will, original sin, and kindred subjects, has operated, in another direction, to diminish responsibility, where most especially it needs to be felt, that is, in Christian families.

What then do we mean by the organic unity of the family? It will be understood, of course, that we do not speak of a physical or vascular connection, for, after birth, there is no such connection existing, any more than there is between persons of different families. In so far, however, as a connection of parentage, or derivation has affected the character, that fact must be included, though it cannot be regarded as a chief element in the unity asserted. Perhaps I shall be understood with the greatest facility, if I say that the family is such a body, that a power over character is exerted therein, *which cannot properly be called influence.* We commonly use the term *influence* to denote a persuasive power, or a governmental power, exerted purposely, and with a conscious design to effect some result in the subject. In maintaining the organic unity of the family, I mean to assert, that a power is exerted by parents over children, not only when they teach, encourage, persuade, and govern, but without any purposed control whatever. The bond is so intimate that they do it unconsciously and undesignedly—they must do it. Their character, feelings, spirit, and principles must propagate themselves, whether they will or not. However, as influence, in the sense just given, cannot be *received* by childhood, prior to the age of reason and deliberative choice, the control of parents, purposely exerted, must be regarded, during that early period, as an absolute force, not as influence. All such acts of control therefore must,

in metaphysical propriety, and as far as the child is concerned, be classed under the general denomination of *organic* causes. And thus *whatever* power over character is exerted in families one side of consent, in the children, and even before they have come to the age of rational choice, must be taken as organic power, in the same way as if the effect accrued under the law of simple contagion. So too when the child performs acts of will, under parental direction, that involve results of character, without knowing or considering that they do, these must be classed in the same manner.

In general, then, we find the organic unity of the family, in every exertion of power over character, which is not exerted *and* received as influence; that is, with a *design* to address the choice on one side, and *a sense* of responsible choice on the other. Or, to use language more popular, we conceive the manners, personal views, prejudices, practical motives, and spirit of the house, as an atmosphere which passes into all and pervades all, as naturally as the air they breathe. This, however, not in any such absolute or complete sense as to leave no room for individual distinctions. Sometimes the two parents will have a very different spirit themselves, though the grace of God is pledged to make the better, if it be truly right, and hindered by no gross inconsistencies, victorious. Sometimes the child, passing into the sphere of other causes, as in the school, the church, neighboring families, or general society, will emerge and take a character partially distinct—partially, I say; never wholly. The odor of the house will always be in his garments, and the internal difficulties with which he has to struggle, will spring of the family seeds planted in his nature.

Having carefully stated thus what I mean by the *organic* unity of the family, I next proceed to inquire

whether any such unity exists? And here it is worth noticing—

1. That there is nothing in this view which conflicts with the proper individuality of persons and their separate responsibility. We have gained immense advantages, in modern times, as regards society, government, and character, by liberating and exalting the individual man. Far be it from me to underrate these advantages, or to bring them into jeopardy. But a child manifestly cannot be a proper individual, before he is one. Nothing can be gained by assuming that he is, and, if it is not true, much is sure to be lost. Besides, we are never, at any age, so completely individual as to be clear of organic connections that affect our character. To a certain extent and for certain purposes, we are individuals, acting each from his own will. Then to a certain extent and for certain other purposes, we are parts or members of a common body, as truly as the limbs of a tree. We have an open side in our nature, where a common feeling enters, where we adhere, and through which we are actuated by a common will. There we are many—here we are one.

It is remarkable too how often, without knowing it, and, as it were instinctively, we assume the fact, and act upon it. We do it, for example, as between nations, where it is not so much the moral life as the national that constructs the supposed unity. One nation, for instance, has injured or oppressed another—sought to crush, or actually crushed another by invasion. A century or more afterwards, the wrong is remembered, and the injured nation takes the field, still burning for redress. The history of Carthage and Rome gives us an example. But, suppose it had been said—"This is very absurd in you Carthaginians. The Romans, who did you the injury, are all dead, and those who now bear the name are their children's children. They have done you no injury any more than the people of

Britain or India. Neither is it the walls, or streets, or temples of Rome that have injured you. The Roman territory is mere land, and this has not injured you. Why then go to war with the Romans? How absurd to think of redressing your old injuries by a war with men who have done you no harm!" Now, it was by just this kind of sophistry that Mr. Jefferson proved that a public debt is obligatory for only one generation, and possibly the Carthaginians might have been speculatively stumbled by such reasonings. Still, they could not have been quite satisfied, I think, of their validity. Against all speculation, they would still have felt that the proposed war was somehow reconcilable with reason. The question is not whether, on Christian principles, they were right, but whether, on natural principles, they were absurd. This probably no reader of the history has ever felt. For, whether it squares with our speculative notions or not, we do all tacitly assume the organic unity of nations. The past we behold, living in the present, and all together we regard as one, inhabited by the common life. How much more true is this (though in a different way) in families, where the common life is so nearly absolute over the members; where they are all enclosed within the four walls of their dwellings, partakers in a common blood, in common interests, wants, feelings, and principles.

2. We discover the organic unity of families, in the fact that one generation is the natural offspring of another. And so much is there in this, that the children almost always betray their origin in their looks and features. The stamp of a common nature is on them, revealed in the stature, complexion, gait, form, and dispositions. Sometimes we seem to see remarkable exceptions. But, in such cases, we should commonly find, if we could bring up to view the ancestors of remoter generations, that the family *bond is still* perpetuated, only by a wider reach of connec-

tion. There are said to be two maiden sisters, the last of a distinguished family, now living in England, who, having no resemblance to any near ancestor, have yet a very striking resemblance to the portrait, still hanging in the family mansion, of an ancestor seven generations back. Indeed, I have myself distinguished, by their looks, the relationship of two persons, connected by a common derivation eight generations back, and who more closely resembled each other in their persons, than either his nearest kindred. So that, in cases where there seems to be no transmission of resemblances, there is yet a probable transmission, only one that is covert and more comprehensive. Now, strong external resemblances may co-exist with marked external differences, and therefore do not prove a coincidence of character. And yet it cannot be denied that, as far as they go, they argue a transmission of capacities and dispositions, which enter into character, as remote causes or occasions. Nor does it make any difference, as regards the matter in question, whether souls or spiritual natures come into being through propagation, or not. If they are created, as some fancy, by the immediate inbreathing of God, still they are measured by the house they are to live in, and the outward man is, in all cases, a fit organ for the person within. The dispositions, tempers, capacities, the natural, and, to a great extent, the moral character, have the outward frame, as a fit organ of use and expression. It will even be observed too that, in cases where there is a remarkable change of character, it will be signified, in due time, by a change of manner, aspect, and expression.

Besides, it is well understood that qualities received by training, and *not* in themselves natural, do also pass by transmission. It is said, for example, that the dog used in hunting was originally trained by great care and effort, and that now almost no training is necessary; for the artificial quality has become, to a great extent, natural in the

stock. We have also a most ominous example of this fact in the human species. I speak of the Jewish race. The singular devotion of this race to money and traffic is even a proverb. But their ancestors, of the ancient times, were not thus distinguished. They were a simple, agricultural people, remarkable for nothing but their religious opinions, and, in a late period of the commonwealth, for their fanatical heroism and obstinacy. Whence the change? History gives the mournful answer, showing them to view, for long ages, as a hated and down-trodden people, allowed no rights in the soil, shut up within some narrow and foul precinct in the cities, compelled to subsist by some meager traffic, denied every possession but money, and suffered to keep in security not even that, save as they could hide it in secret places, and cloak the suspicion of wealth under a sordid exterior. They have thus been educated to be misers by the extortions and the hatred of Christendom; till finally an artificial nature, so to speak, has been formed in the race, and we take it even as the instinct of a Jew, to get money by small traffic and sharp bargains. So there is little room to doubt that every sort of character and employment, even, passes an effect and works some pre-disposition in those who come after.

Could we enter into the mental habits of those children, who are spoken of in my text, and trace out all the threads of their inward character and disposition, we should doubtless find some color of idolatry in the fibre of their very being. They are not such as they would be, if their parents, of this and remote generations, had been worshipers of the true God. Their talents, dispositions, propensities are different. The idol god is in their faces and their bones, and his stamp is on their spirit. Not in such a sense that the sin of idolatry is in them—that is inconceivable; for no proper sin can pass by transmission—but that *they have* a vicious, or prejudical infection from it, a dam-

age accruing from their historical connection and that of their progenitors with it.

Nor, with these familiar laws of physiology before us, is it reasonable to doubt that, where there is a long line of godly fathers and mothers, kept up in regular succession for many generations, a religious temperament may at length be produced, that is more in the power of conscience, less wayward as regards principles of integrity, and more pliant to the Christian motives. More can be said with no confidence; for the best Christians have but a mixed character.

3. We shall find that there is a law of connection, after birth, under which power over character is exerted, without any design to do it. For a considerable time after birth, the child has no capacity of will and choice developed, and therefore is not a subject of influence, in the common sense of that term. He is not as yet a complete individual; he has only powers and capacities that prepare him to be, when they are unfolded. They are in him only as wings and a capacity to fly are in the egg. Meantime, he is open to *impressions* from every thing he sees. His character is forming, under a principle, not of choice, but of nurture. The spirit of the house is breathed into his nature, day by day. The anger and gentleness, the fretfulness and patience—the appetites, passions, and manners—all the variant moods of feeling exhibited round him, pass into him as impressions, and become seeds of character in him—not because the parents will, but because it must be so, whether they will or not. They propagate their own evil in the child, not by design, but under a law of moral infection. Before the children begin to gather wood for the sacrifice, the spirit of the idol and his faith has been communicated. The airs and feelings and conduct of idolatry have filled their nature with impressions, which are back of all choice and memory. Go out to them then, as they are gathering

faggots for the idol sacrifice, ask them what questions they have had about the service of the god, what doubts, whether any unsatisfied debate or perplexing struggle has visited their minds, and you will probably awaken their first thoughts on the subject by the inquiry itself. All because they have grown up in the idol worship, from a point back of memory. They received it through their impressions, before they were able to receive it from choice. And so it is with all the moral transactions of the house. The spirit of the house is in the members by nurture, not by teaching, not by any attempt to communicate the same, but because it is the air the children breathe.

Now, it is in the twofold manner set forth, under this and the previous head of my discourse, that our race have fallen, as a race, into moral corruption and apostasy. In these two methods, the race have been subjected, as an organic unity, to evil; so that when they come to the age of proper individuality, the damage received has prepared them to set forth, on a course of blamable and guilty transgression. The question of original or imputed sin has been much debated in modern times, and the effort has been to vindicate the personal responsibility of each individual, as a moral agent. Nor is any thing more clear, on first principles, than that no man is responsible for any sin but his own. The sin of no person can be transmitted as a sin, or charged to the account of another. But it does not therefore follow that there are no moral connections between individuals, by which one becomes a corrupter of others. If we are units, so also are we a race, and the race is one—one family, one organic whole; such that the fall of the head involves the fall of all the members. Under the old doctrines of original sin, federal headship, and the like, cast away by many, ridiculed by not a few, there yet lies a great and momentous truth, announced by reason *as clearly* as by Scripture—that in Adam all die; that by

one man's disobedience many were made sinners; that death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Not that this original scheme of unity is any disadvantage. I firmly believe and think I could show the contrary even. Enough that so the Scriptures speak, and that so we see, by inspection itself. There can be no greater credulity, than for any man to expect that a sinful and death-struck being, one who has fallen out of the harmony of his mold by sin, should yet communicate no trace of evil from himself, no diseased or damaged quality, no moral discolor, to the generations that derive their existence from him. To make that possible, every law of physiology must be adjourned, and, what is more, all that we see with our eyes, in the eventful era of impressions, must be denied.

I am well aware that those who have advocated, in former times, the church dogma of original sin, as well as those who adhere to it now, speak only of a taint derived by natural or physical propagation, and do not include the taint derived afterwards, under the law of family infection. It certainly can be no heresy to include the latter; and, since it is manifest that both fall within the same general category of organic connection, it is equally manifest that both ought to be included, and, in all systematic reasonings, must be. If, during the age of impressions in the child, and previous to the development of will, a power is exerted over character—exerted necessarily, both as regards the sinful parent and the child, and that as truly as if it fell within the laws of propagation itself—it cannot be right to attribute the moral taint wholly, or even principally, to propagation. Until the child comes to his will, we must regard him still as held within the matrix of the parental life, and then, when he is ripe for responsible choice, as born for action—a proper and complete person. Taking this comprehensive view of the organic unity of successive generations of men, the truth we assert of human deprava-

tion is not a half-truth exaggerated (which many will not regard as any truth at all), but it is a broad, well-authenticated doctrine, which no intelligent observer of facts and principles can deny. It shows the past descending on the present, the present on the future, by an inevitable law, and yet gives every parent the hope of mitigating the sad legacy of mischief he entails upon his children, by whatever improvements of character and conduct he is able to make—a hope which Christian promise so far clears to his view, as even to allow him the presumption that his child may be set forth into responsible action, as a Christian person.

In offering these thoughts, it will be seen that I have not digressed from my subject, but have extended the proof of my doctrine rather, discovering, within its scope, the fall of man itself. As a farther proof of the organic unity of the family, I allege—

4. The fact that, in all organic bodies known to us—states, churches, sects, armies—there is a common spirit, by which they are pervaded and distinguished from each other. And we use this word *spirit*, in such cases, to denote a power interfused, a comprehensive will actuating the members, regarding also the commom body itself, as a larger and more inclusive individual. How different, for example, is the spirit of France from the spirit of England? the spirit of both from that of the United States? and that from the spirit of the Spartan or Athenian republic? This national spirit, too, is, as it were, a common power in each, by which the subordinate individual members are assimilated, and made to have a kind of organic character. And so much is there in this, that an Englishman cannot make to himself a French character, or any one of us an English character. We cannot act the character one of another; for so distant are the feelings, prejudices, and temperaments of each, that they cannot even be accurately conceived *and reproduced* unless we are actually enveloped in them *as an atmosphere*.

In the same manner, there is a peculiar spirit in every church. Whether you take the larger divisions, the Jewish, the Greek, the Roman, the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Congregational, or descend to the particular churches of a given city, you will find something characteristic in each—a common power, which gives a common stamp to the members peculiar to themselves. Or, if you visit a Quaker settlement, where a few men and women are gathered into a kind of church family, you will discover that the members are pervaded, all, by a peculiar spirit, as distinct from the world around them as if they were a new-discovered people. And these Quaker settlements may be taken as a kind of intermediate link between the church, state and the family.

Passing then to families, you are not surprised to discover the same thing. This is specially evident where the family is isolated, and does not mingle extensively with the world. You can scarcely open the door, and take a seat in their house, least of all can you go to their table, or spend a night in their hospitality, without being impressed by the fact. And this family spirit will sometimes be exceedingly opposite to the spirit of goodness. Here it is money, money, written on every face; here it is good living; here show; here scandal and detraction. Sometimes the sense of religion and of spiritual things will seem to be nearly lost, or obliterated. Sometimes a positive hatred of God and all good men and principles will constitute the staple of family feeling. Sometimes a dull and sullen contempt of such things will hold the place of open animosity.

Now, it is true that the family spirit does not always perfectly master and assimilate all the members. You will find a Christian son or daughter, here and there, in spite of the ruling spirit of the house. This, however, simply because families mingle, in some degree, with the world,

falling thus under the power of another spirit, that masters the spirit reigning at home. The children go into other families, where they are visited by other feelings. They go into the church of God, where the church spirit breathes another atmosphere. In the school, they are penetrated by the school spirit. In the shop, or in the transactions of trade, the same is true. Were it not for this, I doubt whether the family spirit would not uniformly be found to rule the character of all the members. Who ever expects that an idolatrous religion, in the house, will not uniformly produce idolaters? So the Mohammedan spirit makes only Mohammedans. In like manner, a thievish house perpetrates a race of thieves. Consider also the ductility and the perfect passivity of childhood. Early childhood resists nothing. What is given it receives, making no selection. To expect therefore that a child will form to himself a spirit opposite to the spirit of the family, without once feeling the power of a counteractive spirit, would be, in the highest degree, unreasonable. Doubtless he has a conscience, which is the law of God, in his breast, and he has a will free to choose what his conscience requires. But his passions are unfolded before his discretion, his prejudices bent before he assumes the function of self-government. He breathes the atmosphere of the house. He sees the world through his parents' eyes. Their objects become his. Their life and spirit mold him. If they are are carnal, coarse, passionate, profane, sensual, devilish, his little plastic nature takes the poison of course. Their very motions, manners, and voices, will be distinguishable in him. He lives and moves and has his being in them.

I do not say, of course, that he will exactly resemble them in character. Were he to receive a contagious disease, he would, doubtless, be differently handled under it, from the person who gave the infection. I only say, that *the moral* disease of the family he assuredly will take, and

that probably, without ever a question, or a cautious feeling started. If some other spirit, from other families, or the church, or the world, do not reach him, the organic spirit of the house will infallibly shape and subordinate his character.

5. We are led to the same conclusions, by considering what may be called the organic *working* of a family. The child begins, at length, to develop his character, in and through his voluntary power. But he is still under the authority of the parent, and has only a partial control of himself, in the extension of which, he is gradually approaching a complete personality. Now, there is a perpetual working in the family, by which the wills both of the parents and the children are held in exercise, and which, without any design to affect character on one side, or conscious consent on the other, is yet fashioning results of a moral quality, as it were, by the joint industry of the house. And these results are to be taken, according to our definition, as included in the organic unity of the family. I except, of course, all the voluntary actings that are designed to influence the child, and are yielded to by him, as consciously good or wrong.

The truth here brought to view is graphically set forth in my text. Whatever working there is in the house, all work together. If the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the cakes, the children will gather the wood, and the idol worship will set the whole circle of the house in action. The child being under the law of the parents, they will keep him at work to execute their plans, or their sins, as the case may be; and, as they will seldom think of what they do, or require, so he will seldom have any scruple concerning it. The property gained belongs to the family. They have a common interest, and every prejudice, or animosity, felt by the parents, the children are sure to feel even more intensely. They are all locked

together, in one cause—in common cares, hopes, offices, and duties; for their honor and dishonor, their sustenance, their ambition, all their objects are common. So they are trained of necessity to a kind of general working, or co-operation, and, like stones rolled together in some brook or eddy, they wear each other into common shapes. If the family subsist by plunder, then the infant is swaddled as a thief, the child wears a thief's garments, and feeds the growth of his body on stolen meat; and, in due time, he will have the trade upon him, without ever knowing that he has taken it up, or when he took it up. If the father is intemperate, the children must go on errands to procure his supplies, lose the shame that might be their safety, be immersed in the fumes of liquor in going and coming, and why not rewarded by an occasional taste of what is so essential to the enjoyment of life? If the family subsist in idleness and beggary, then the children will be trained to lie skillfully, and maintain their false pretences with a plausible effrontery—all this, you will observe, not as a sin, but as a trade.

Nor does what I am saying hold, only in cases of extreme viciousness and depravity. Whatever fire the fathers kindle, the children are always found gathering the wood—always helping as accessaries and apprentices. If the father reads a newspaper, or a sporting gazette, on Sunday, the family must help him find it. If he writes a letter of business on Sunday, he will send his child to the office with the letter. If the mother is a scandal-monger, she will make her children spies and eaves-droppers. If she sends word to her servant to say, at the door, that she is not at home, she will sometimes send it by her child. If she is ambitious that her children should excel in a display of finery and fashion, they must wear the show and grow up in the spirit of it. If her house is a den of disorder and filth, they must be at home in it. Fretfulness

and ill-temper in the parents are provocations, and, therefore, somewhat more efficacious than commandments to the same. The proper result will be a congenial assemblage, in the house, of petulance and ill-nature. The niggardly parsimony that quarrels with a child, when asking for a book needful for his proficiency at school, is teaching him that money is worth more than knowledge. If the parents are late risers, the children must not disturb the house, but stay quiet, and take a lesson that is to assist their energy and promptness in the future business of life. If they go to church only half of the day, they will not send their children the other half. If they never read the Bible, they will never teach it. If they laugh at religion, they will put a face upon it, which will make their children justify the contempt they express. This enumeration might be indefinitely extended. Enough that we see, in the working of the house, how all the members work together. The children fall into their places naturally, as it were, and unconsciously, to do and to suffer exactly what the general scheme of the house requires. Without any design to that effect, all the actings of business, pleasure, and sin, propagate themselves throughout the circle, as the weights of a clock maintain the workings of the wheels. Where there is no effort to teach wrong, or thought of it, the house is yet a school of wrong, and the life of the house is only a practical drill in evil.

Having sufficiently established, as I think, by these illustrations, the organic unity of families, it remains to add some practical thoughts of a more specific nature. And—

1. It becomes a question of great moment, as connected with the doctrine established, whether it is the design of the Christian scheme to take possession of the organic laws of the family, and wield them as instruments, in any sense, of a regenerative character? And here we are met by the

broad principle, that Christianity endeavors to make every object, favor, and relation an instrument of righteousness, according to its orignal design. What intelligent person ever supposed that this original constitution, by which one generation derives its existence and receives the bent of its character from another, was designed of God to be the vehicle only of depravity? It might as well be supposed that men themselves were made to be containers of depravity? The only supposition that honors God is, that the organic unity, of which I speak, was ordained originally for the nurture of holy virtue in the beginning of each soul's history; and that Christianity, or redemption, must of necessity take possession of the abused vehicle, and sanctify it for its own merciful uses. That an engine of so great power should be passed by, when every other law and object in the universe is appropriated and wielded as an instrument of grace, and that in a movement for the redemption of the race, is inconceivable. The conclusion thus reached does not carry us, indeed, to the certain inference that the organic unity of the family will avail to set forth every child of Christian parents, in a Christian life. But if we consider the tremendous power it has, as an instrument of evil, how far short of such an opinion does it leave us, when computing the reach of its power as an instrument of grace?

Passing next to the Scriptures, we find our reasonings justified, as explicitly as we can desire. I am not disposed to press the language of Scripture, which is popular, to extreme conclusions. But I observe that Christ is called a second Adam and a last Adam: language, to say the least, that suits the idea of a proposed union with the race, under its organic laws—as if, entering into the Christian family, his design were to fill it with a family spirit, which shall controvert and master the old evil spirit. The declaration corresponds that—as by one man's disobedience many were

made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous—language that measures the grace by the mischief, and shows it flowing in a parallel, but fuller stream. It may not be easy to settle, beyond dispute, the relation of the old covenant to the new; but there can be no question that the church, under Abraham, was measured, in some sense, by the organic unity of the family of Abraham. The covenant was a family covenant, in which God engaged to be the God of the seed, as of the father. And the seal of the covenant was a seal of *faith*, applied to the whole house, as if the continuity of faith were somehow to be, or somehow might be maintained, in a line that is parallel with the continuity of sin, in the family. Nor was the result to depend on mere natural generation, however sanctified, but on the organic causes also, that are involved in family nurture, after birth. For we are expressly informed, (Gen. xviii. 19,) that God rested his covenant, or engagement, on the conduct of Abraham—"for I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, *that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.*" And thus we see that the old church, beyond any possible question, was to have its line of perpetuity, in and by the same laws of organic unity, which sin has made the vehicle of depravity. Descending then to the New Testament, under Jesus the Redeemer, he is declared to have suffered, "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles." The Gentiles are said to be "grafted in." The new "seed," viz: "Christ," are said to be the seed of Abraham, and "heirs of the promise" made to him. The old rite of proselyte baptism, which made the families receiving it Jewish citizens and children of Abraham, was applied over directly to the Christian disciples; the rite went by "households." The new promise was declared to be—"to you and to your

children." Even the old Jewish law, that one Jewish parent made a Jewish child, is brought into the church, and one believing parent "sanctifies" the child. In all of which, it seems to be clearly held that grace shall travel by the same conveyance with sin; that the organic unity, which I have spoken of chiefly as an instrument of corruption, is to be occupied and sanctified by Christ, and become an instrument also of mercy and life. And thence it follows that the seal of faith, applied to households, is to be no absurdity; for it is the privilege and duty of every Christian parent that his children shall come forth into responsible action, as a regenerated stock. The organic unity is to be a power of life. God engages, on his part, that it may be, and calls the Christian parent to promise, on his part, that it shall be. Thus the church has a constitutive element from the family in it still, as it had in the days of Abraham. The church life—that is, the life of Christ—collects families into a common organism, and then, by sanctifying the laws of organic unity in families, extends its quickening power to the generation following, so as to include the future, and make it one with the past. And so the church, in all ages, becomes a body under Christ the head, as the race is a body under Adam the head—a living body, quickened by him who hath life in himself, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth.

2. The theological importance of our doctrine of organic unity, when brought up to this point, is exhibited in many ways, and especially in the fact that it gives the only true solution of the Christian church and of baptism as related to membership. I hardly dare attempt to speak of the "sacramental grace," supposed to attend the rite of baptism, under the priestly forms of Christianity; for I have never been able to give any consistent and dignified meaning to the language, in which it is set forth. That there *is a grace* attendant, falling on all the parties concerned, is

quite evident, if they are doing their duty; for no person, whether laic or priest, can do, or intend what is right, without some spiritual benefit. But the child is said to be "regenerate, spiritually united to Christ, a new creature in Christ Jesus," under the official grace of baptism. Then this language, so full of import, is defined, after all, to mean only that the child is in the church, where the grace of God surrounds him—translated (not internally, but externally) from the sphere of nature into a new sphere, where all the aids of grace, available for his salvation, are furnished. Sometimes it is added that his sins are remitted, though no reasonable man believes that he has any sins to remit; or, if the meaning be that the corrupted quality, physiologically inherent in his nature, is washed away, he will show in due time that it is not; and no one, in fact, believes that it is. Then if it be asked, whether the new sphere of grace will assuredly work a gracious character? no, is the answer. If the child is not faithful, or hinders the grace, he will lose it—that is, he will not stay regenerate. And then as the child, in every case, is sure, in some bad sense, not to be faithful, he is equally sure to lose the grace, and be landed in a second state that is worse than the first. And thus it turns out, after all, as far as I can see, that the grace magnified in the beginning, by words of so high an import, is a thing of no value—it is nothing. It is, in fact, one of our most decided objections to this scheme of sacramental grace, (paradoxical as it may seem,) that, really and truly, there is not enough of import left to save the meaning of the rite. The grace is words only, and an air of imposture (I speak constructively) is all that remains. The rite is fertile only in maintaining a superstition. Practically speaking, it only exalts a prerogative. By a motion of his hand, the priest breaks in, to interrupt and displace all the laws of character in life—communicating an abrupt, ictic grace, as much wider of all dignity and reason, than

any which the new light theology has asserted, as the regenerative power is more subject to a human dispensation. A superstitious homage collects about his person. The child looks on him as one who opens heaven by a ceremony! The ungodly parent hurries to him, to get the regenerative grace for his dying child. The bereaved parent mourns inconsolably, and even curses himself, that he neglected to obtain the grace for his child, now departed. The priest, in the eye, displaces the memory of duty and godliness in the heart. A thousand superstitions, degrading to religion and painful to look upon, hang around this view of baptism. Not to produce them, the doctrine must yield up its own nature.

In all this, I speak constructively, as reasoning from the doctrine asserted, and as I am able to understand it. Constructive results are never more than partially verified by historic facts; for great truths, blended with the error, qualify and mitigate its effects.

Let us see now whether, taking our stand before the doctrine asserted in this discourse, we can discover a real and proper ground for infant baptism. To open the path, observe that the church of God is not gathered or organized by baptism. Baptism simply indicates or manifests a membership already existing. Therefore, in adults, it follows belief. It is the seal of a faith which Abraham had, being yet uncircumcised. The church of God is not a mechanical, but a vital creature. It is organized by spiritual life, and cannot, as a vital creature, be organized by any thing else. But spiritual life is, in itself, invisible, and the next problem is to make the organism, quickened thereby, a visible organism. This will be effected, to a certain degree, naturally, by a manifestation of its power in Christian fruits. By their fruits ye shall know them. Every man who bears the Christian fruits is seen to be in *the visible* church of God—priests, covenants, sacraments,

all out of the question—though it is hardly conceivable that any one should reject God's ordinances, for a length of time, without reflecting some suspicion of obliquity by such a fruit. But to end all debate and suspicion, and comfort the church visible by some definite rule of measurement, God appoints a *formal badge* of visibility, viz: baptism constituting, thus, a *formal* visible church. To illustrate by a civil analogy, we are all American citizens, but the elector's oath is a *formal badge* of citizenship, appointed by the laws. And these electors are, in a certain sense, the nation, though not more really citizens than before. In a like sense, baptized persons constitute the church; inasmuch as they stand forth to represent, by a *formal embodiment*, the Christian spirit, or spiritual life. Still, they were in the church before, in virtue of spiritual life. And so others are in it now, e. g. the Quakers, who are not baptized—united to the head, and showing that union by their fruits.

But where now is the faith, the spiritual life, pre-supposed in baptism—when a child is the subject? It is in the parent, I answer, as the head of an organic unity in the house. Or, as it may better suit the Episcopal habit of thought, it is in the church of God, the body of Christ, considered as inhabited and quickened by his Spirit—which quickening Spirit, as was just now showed under my last head, organizing the whole body, travels through the parent, and mainly through him reaches the child. The child therefore is in the church, in virtue of the church life, as our Episcopal brethren require, for the church life is but another name for the life of God, which organizes the church, and sets the past in connection with the future, through the organic laws of the family. Next he is in the *formal* visible church through baptism, the rite by which a formal embodiment of the church is made. The church, meantime, has not superseded the family. The child is

still within the known laws of character in the house, to receive, under these, whatever good may have reached him· not snatched away by an abrupt, fantastical, and therefore incredible grace. He is taken to be regenerate, not historically speaking, but presumptively, on the ground of his known connection with the parent character, and the divine or church life, which is the life of that character. Perhaps I shall be understood more easily, if I say that the child is *potentially* regenerate, being regarded as existing in connection with powers and causes that *contain* the fact, before time and separate from time. For when the fact appears historically, under the law of time, it is not more truly real, in a certain sense, than it was before. And then the grace conferred, being conferred by no casual act, but resting in the established laws of character, in the church and the house, is not lost by unfaithfulness, but remains and lingers still, though abused and weakened, to encourage new struggles.

Should it not be some comfort, also, that we can find a view of the church, which, under all names and varieties, saves its unity—a view which excuses the necessity of odious exclusions and offensive assumptions, which makes us brothers still, and, as we hold the head, unites us evermore in the bonds of a brotherly feeling. What heart, retaining even a trace of Christian magnanimity—what heart not pinched, by bigotry, to a narrowness that even scants the magnanimity of nature—will not be disposed to accept results of a character so truly Catholic?

Thus it will be seen that the doctrine of organic unity I have been asserting, proves its theologic value, as an adequate solvent for all the difficulties of this very difficult subject. Only one difficulty remains, viz: that so few can believe the doctrine.

2. It is evident that the voluntary intention of parents, *in regard to* their children, is no measure, either of their

merit or their sin. Few parents are so base, or so lost to natural affection, as really to intend the injury of their children. However irreligious, or immoral, they more commonly desire a worthy and correct character for their children, often even a Christian character. But, in the great and momentous truth now set forth, you perceive it is not what you intend for your children, so much as what you are, that is to have its effect. They are connected, by an organic unity, not with your instructions, but with your *life*. And your life is more powerful than your instructions can be. They might be jealous of intended corruption, and withstand it; but the spirit of the house, which is your spirit, the whole working of the house, which is actuated by you, is what no exercise of will, even if they had more of it than they have, could well resist. Therefore, what you are, they will almost necessarily be; and then, as you are responsible for what you are, you must also be responsible for the ruin brought on them. And, if you desired better things for them, as you probably say, the more guilty are you that, knowing and desiring better things, you thwarted your desires by your own evil life.

So there are Christians who intend and do many things for their children, and thus acquit themselves of all blame in regard to their character. Here, alas! is the perpetual error of Christian parents, so called, that they endeavor to make up, by direct efforts, for the mischiefs of a loose and neglectful life. They convince themselves that teaching, lecturing, watch, discipline, things done with a purpose, are the sum of duty. As if mere affectations and will-works could cheat the laws of life and character ordained by God! Your character is a stream, a river, flowing down upon your children, hour by hour. What you do here and there to carry an opposing influence is, at best, only a ripple that you make on the surface of the stream. It

reveals the sweep of the current; nothing more. If you expect your children to go with the ripple, instead of the stream, you will be disappointed. I beseech you then, as you love your children, to admit other and worthier thoughts, thoughts more safe for them and certainly for you. Understand that it is the family spirit, the organic life of the house—that which works by an unconscious, unseen power, and perpetually—the silent power of a domestic godliness—this it is which forms your children to God. And, if this be wanting, all that you may do beside, will be as likely to annoy and harden as to bless.

3. It seems to be a proper inference from the doctrine I have exhibited, that Christian parents ought to speak freely to their children, at times, of their own faults and infirmities. If they are faithful, if they live as Christians, if the spirit of Christ bears rule in the house, they will yet have faults, and they ought to make no secret of the fact. The impression should be made, that they themselves are struggling with infirmities; that they are humbled under a sense of these infirmities; that there is much in them for God to pardon, much for their children to overlook, or even to forgive; and that God alone can assist them to lead themselves and their family up to a better world. Instead of lecturing their children, always, on their peccadilloes and sins, it would be better, sometimes, to give a lecture on their own. This, if rightly done, would attract the friendly sympathy of their children, guard them against the injurious impressions they make when they trip themselves, and unite the whole family in a common struggle heavenward. There is no other way to correct the mixture of evil you will blend with the family spirit, but to deplore it, and make it an acknowledged truth, that you, too, are only a child in goodness. But if you take a throne of papal infallibility in your family, and endeavor to fight out, *with the* rod, what you fail in by your misconduct, you

may make your children fear you and hate you, but you will not win them to Christ. Alas! there are too many Christian families that are only little popedoms. The very rule is tyranny—infallibility assumed, then maintained, by the holy inquisition of terror and penal chastisement! God will not smile on such a kind of discipline.

4. It is evident what rule should regulate in the society and external intercourse of children. It is a very great mercy, as I have said, that the children of a bad or irreligious family are sometimes permitted to be inmates elsewhere; to go into virtuous and Christian families, where a better spirit reigns. There they see, perhaps, the genuine demonstrations of order, of purity, and of good affections; they hear the voice of prayer, they come where the spirit of heaven breathes. It is a new world, and they are filled with new impressions. So, if a child may go to a school where order, right principle, virtuous manners, and the love of knowledge reign, and find a respite there from the shiftlessness, vice, and brutality at home, how great is the privilege! In this view, a good school is almost the only mercy that can be extended to the hapless sons and daughters of vice. Their good—most dismal thought!—is to be delivered from their home; to escape the spirit of hell that encompasses their helpless age, and feel, though it be but a few hours a day, the power of another spirit!

But I was speaking of the rule to be observed in the society of children. Let every Christian beware how he makes his children inmates in an irreligious family. It will do, sometimes, to allow the children of an irreligious family to be inmates, temporarily, in your own. You may do it for their advantage; and if you can enlist the hearts of your children in the merciful intentions you cherish, it may even be a good exercise for them. But it is a very different thing to place your children within the atmosphere of another house. Send them not where the spirit

of evil reigns. Understand how plastic their nature is, how easily it receives the contagion of another spirit. You yourselves may have intercourse with ungodly persons; it may be your duty to seek it for their benefit; but you may well be cautious how far you subject your children, especially in early years, to the intercourse of irreligious families.

And what shall I say to parents, who are themselves irreligious? Perhaps you make it your boast that you give your children their liberty; that you mean to allow them to be just as religious as they please. And is that enough, do you think, to discharge your duties to them? Is it enough to breathe the spirit of evil and sin into them and around them every hour, to give them no Christian counsel, to train them up in a prayerless house, drill them into conformity with all your worldly ways, and then say that you allow them full liberty to be Christians? Having them under your law, determining yourselves that organic spirit, which is to be the element, the very breath of their moral existence, will you then boast that you mean to allow them to be as virtuous as they please? Ah, if there be any argument, which might compel you to be Christians yourselves, it is these arguments of affection that God has given you. But if you will not be Christians yourselves, then, at least, show your children some degree of mercy, by delivering them, as much as possible, from yourselves! Send them, as often as you may, where a better spirit reigns. Make them inmates with Christian families, as you have opportunity. Let them go where they will hear a prayer and see a Christian Sabbath. Send them, or take them with you, to the church of God, and the Sabbath-School. Give them a respite often from the family spirit and the organic law of the house. If you yourselves will not fashion them for the skies, let others, more faithful than *you,* and more merciful, do it for you.

THE SCENE OF THE PENTECOST

AND

A CHRISTIAN PARISH.

And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.—*Acts* ii. 44–47.

THIS whole passage is remarkable, as being an external description of the first disciples. It describes them, not by their inward experiences, or spiritual exercises, but by their outward demonstrations. It exhibits the spring-time and the first blossom of love. The beauty of the scene consists in the fact, that the disciples hardly know, as yet, what their love signifies. Assembled as pilgrims, from all parts of the world, the Christian love has fallen upon them, and they find, what is altogether new and strange, that rich and poor, honorable and base, despite of all distinctions, they love one another as brethren! Not knowing what to make of it, or, apparently, whether they are hereafter to have any thing to do but to love one another, they give themselves wholly up to love, as children to a play—come what will, they are all agreed in this, that they want only fellowship with each other, fellowship in doctrine, fellowship in praise, fellowship in bread, and why not also in goods?

How sad! many will exclaim, that a scene so amiable and lovely could not continue, and that all Christian disciples, to the end of the world, could not fall into the same delightful picture in their conduct! Just as sad, I answer, as it is that children cannot always be children; for these are the children of love, acting out the simple instinct of love, and wholly ignorant, as yet, of the cares, labors, and confused struggles, in which their Christian spirit is said to have its trial. Doubtless we are to regret, as a loss, whatever departure we may have suffered from the *spirit* of these first disciples; for the spirit of Christian life is one and the same, in all diversities of form and conduct. But it is plain to any one, who will exercise the least consideration, that it was just as impossible to perpetuate these first demonstrations, as it is to preserve the infantile airs of children after childhood is passed, carrying them still on through the sturdy toils and cares of a mature age. The moment we leave these first scenes, and pass on, down the course of time, to an age where the gospel is familiarly known, its institutions incorporated with society—taking our stand, we will say, in an old Christian parish—we see at once that a body of disciples, now living in the same spirit, must of necessity exhibit, in their outward conduct, a picture exceedingly different. Some things will be discontinued which are here prominent. Others will be varied in their form, or reproduced under new combinations. Still, other instrumentalities and methods of action will be introduced or created.

My object, in pursuing this subject, is to arrive at a conception, if possible, of the arrangements, views, modes of proceeding, and Christian conduct, by which practical religion may best be advanced, in a modern Christian parish. And, that I may do this, in the most effective and satisfactory manner, I have chosen to connect my subject with the pentecostal assembly, that we may see by what

law of change our modern arrangements and demonstrations are produced, and how it is the genius of Christianity to modify methods and create forms for itself. I am determined also to this way of handling my subject, by the fact that we seem to have derived certain views of religious conduct from the scene of the pentecost, which are not properly derivable from it, and which need correction.

Neglecting logical precision, in the distribution of my subject, I shall enumerate—

I. Some of the points, in which it must be admitted, by all intelligent persons, that the modern Christian parish is not to be conformed to the scene of the pentecost. And then,

II. Give a connected view of the conduct of a modern congregation, in points where we are likely to suffer some diversity of impression.

The scene of the pentecost was altogether new and strange; being, as it were, a Solemn Inaugural of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Doubtless the reality of a divine power, exercised in human souls, had before been experienced—experienced, I may say, in every soul that ever had lived. Such a grace is once or twice named and sought for, in prayer, in the Old Testament. Still, the doctrine of a systematic, quickening, sanctifying agency, or inbreathing love, as connected with Jesus, the world's Redeemer, was yet not conceived. Indeed, such an agency could not be sufficiently developed, until after the redeeming purposes of God had first been set forth to the race, in Jesus the Messiah. This being done, it was next to be shown that God is not withdrawn, in the ascension of Jesus, but abideth with us still subjectively, living as a secret presence in the race, to prosecute the same gracious designs, and draw all hearts unto Himself. And how could such a truth be revealed, except through physical demonstrations and objective shapes or incidents? For

whatever power He might exert, in the recesses of the human spirit, it would probably occur to no one to refer the effects wrought to a Divine Agency. Hence the wondrous character of the scene, which here bursts upon the world—a sound from heaven, a rushing mighty wind sweeping through the hall, lambent tips of fire resting on the heads of the assembly, wondrous utterances or tongues, astonishment, awe, guilty convictions struggling in each bosom, wills bowing to the divine messiahship of Jesus, pardon, peace, new feelings, joys, and principles.

Now, the physical incidents of this scene had nothing to do with its substantial import, save as they were added to suggest the idea of a Divine Agency. They hold the same mechanical relation to the Spirit, as a vehicle, that the human nature of Jesus held to the Divine Word. They are the body, the sensible show of the Spirit, the smoke by which the fire was revealed. So of the tongues. They were the sign of a power that was playing the action of the inner man, and making audible, as it were, the activity within, of a Divine Influence. All these, like the miraculous gifts so conspicuous in the subsequent history, were *manifestations* of the Spirit, given to profit withal; but being only accidents or exponents, were, of course, to be discontinued, when the doctrine of a spiritual influence from God was sufficiently developed. And as these are discontinued, so the spiritual influence itself, when once inaugurated, by these bold and almost violent displays of energy, may be expected, for much the same reasons, to move upon the world in a less imposing method—to remit, in some degree, the extraordinary; and, as life is itself ordinary, become, to the human spirit, what the air is to the body—a Perpetual Element of inbreathing love; to dwell in the families, to follow the individual, and whisper *holy* thoughts, in solitary places and silent hours. He is *to fill the* world, and be a spirit of life and love, present to

all human hearts. He will produce the same exercises produced in the first disciples in the scene of the pentecost; sometimes too he will glorify himself in scenes of social effect and power. But the grand reality revealed is, that he is never far from any one of us; a good presence, illuminating our darkness, helping our weakness, and working in us motions and desires that cannot be uttered.

Other incidents, or demonstrations of the scene, are referable to the fact that these first converts, or subjects of grace, are not at home. They are mostly Jewish pilgrims, who have come up from all parts of the world to attend the festivals. Their property, their business, and, more commonly, their families, are left behind. Many of them are poor persons, wholly unable to support the expense even of a short stay at Jerusalem. The others cannot, of course, leave them to suffer. So they divide their resources with the poor; and some, who belong at Jerusalem, are moved by the overflowing love of Christ in their hearts, to part with their whole property, that they may relieve the necessities of the brotherhood. Only a few days or weeks are thus spent together. Probably, within three months, they are every man at home in his own house, providing for his own family, out of the increase of his own industry and prosperity. During their short stay at Jerusalem, they had nothing to do but to exercise their religion. Accordingly they gave themselves wholly up to it. Now the religious occasion is past; the extraordinary is over, and the ordinary has returned. By this time, they have learned, probably, and received it even as a Christian maxim, that one who does not provide for *his own*, denies the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Again, these first disciples had not yet been called to blend their piety with the common cares and duties of life. Quite likely, they did not, for some time, consider whether they should hereafter have any thing more to do with these

gross and earthly callings. But we, at least, have learned what they must also have learned very soon, that though we cannot live by bread alone, it is yet difficult to live without bread. We have learned that the very church of God itself is perpetuated, in part, by industry and production, that it cannot live by expenditure, that we have something therefore to do, besides breaking bread from house to house; six days to labor, a spectacle of thrift to present to mankind, as a proof that Christian virtue has its blessings. We must shine as good citizens, neighbors, parents, friends. Life is no mere camp-meeting scene; but the greatest of all Christian attainments, we find, is precisely that which the first disciples had not yet thought of, the learning how to blend the spiritual and economical or industrial together; to live in the world, and not be of it; to labor in earthly things, and maintain a conversation in heaven; to unite thrift with charity, and separate gain from greediness; to use property, and not worship it; to prepare comfort, without pursuing pleasure. For it is, by just this kind of trial, that all spiritual strength is gotten, and the Christian life becomes a light to men.

It is also clear that these first disciples were wholly occupied, for a time, with their high frames and the strange ardor of their new experiences; ignorant, therefore, for so long a time, of the extent to which new principles depend, for their support and consolidation, on the regulative force of habit. They had none of them been educated in the new religion. They had all come into it suddenly from without, under a mysterious power. To have spoken to them now of habit, would have been to chill their joy in its birth. They seemed to have a new character by inspiration. What need then of so low an instrument as custom, to fortify a life that was divine? And yet, within a year, they began every one of them, I am quite sure, to think of habit. Old habit began to return upon them, as the

impulse of feeling abated, and they groaned under its terrible power. Now, they saw that nothing good is firmly established in the soul, till it gets the force of a sanctified habit. They struggled on with holy pertinacity, through many mistakes and lapses, after a more purified and habitual union to God. And so they learned, by degrees, to make less of mere frames and sudden revolutions, and more of results that came to pass imperceptibly. Rendering thanks to God, who had called them out of darkness into light, by his quickening Spirit, they saw the reality of the change, less in the frames experienced, and more in the principles accepted. They discovered that it is not so much ecstasies that men want in religion, as it is principles, and that no romantic or enthusiastic flights of experience, unaided by habit, can settle a new principle into practical dominion over the mind. And now, yielding up the hope, which perhaps they had first entertained, that the new religion was to blaze across the world in a series of pentecostal scenes, they fell, gradually, into the conviction that disciples were to be trained for the church, as catechumens, under the power of a spiritual discipline, and partly within the laws of habit. Influences that operate gradually, imperceptibly, and through the medium of godly exercise in the truth, became more important, and the Holy Spirit, being now fully revealed, was accepted as the attendant of ordinary life, the support of its struggles, and the hope of all Christian efforts.

Closely connected with the point we are considering, it is very evident that the first disciples at Jerusalem must have suffered a great change of view, when they returned to their homes, in respect to Christian training in the family. In the first weeks of their joyful experience, it probably had not once occurred to them that the Christian training of children was, hereafter, to be one of the great sources of power to the gospel, and a fruitful spring of supply to

the church. But descending from the almost romantic pitch of feeling, by which they have been exercised, finding themselves at home again, among their children, now arises the question—what Christ will do with their children, and what they are themselves to do for them? .The inquiry ends in a discovery that the children are to be trained up in Christ; not to be gathered as new recruits from the world. Here opens a new era. Henceforth it is not the breaking of bread from house to house—no frames of fellowship, or sudden rhapsodies of feeling—nothing that belongs to a group of pilgrims, resting for a few weeks in a foreign land, and there surprised by the love of Jesus; but it is what godly fathers and mothers may do at home: results to be compassed not in a day, but gradually and carefully, by making the family itself a holy element, and the church a school of love, to all whom it may gather from the world, for Christian nurture and instruction. The very ministrations of religion, too, must be different; for now it is not only one of the duties of the Christian minister to convert men, but also to educate, instruct, edify. The casual, in fact, is not all now, as it was at the pentecost, but the permanent has come into its place. Nothing casual, in fact, is left, save what may be the minister of permanent growth and supply; for Christ is now brought, not into some meeting or caravan of pilgrims, but he has taken possession of the society of man itself.

In the same way, Christianity, in passing into the form of a settled institution, suffers another change, which, to the first disciples, was quite inconceivable. At the first promulgation of the gospel, on the day of pentecost, the question lay between belief and rejection. And beside this, there was, for a long time, no other. Hence belief was taken to be the sure condition of salvation. But, *when* Christ and his gospel had entered into society itself, *and generations* had been trained up in Christian churches

and families, it resulted, of course, that many would be found in the assemblies, who honor the gospel, and, in some proper sense, believe it, but manifestly do not live by its principles. Now, the question lies between outward assent and practical reception. Two classes also of men are found engaged together to uphold the Christian institutions. They have relations to one another, and to the word ministered, such as before did not exist. And now it is no longer means to an end, in preaching the word, to publish the story of Jesus, and authenticate the same by witnesses, as was done amid the scenes of the pentecost, but the labor of preaching henceforth is to make men follow, in practice, what they believe. Or, if miracles were added then, to conclude all unbelief, it is now the labor, since they cannot any longer be seen by the eyes, to prove the miracles. At first there were only friends and enemies, worshipers and scoffers. Now there is a large body of intermediates, or half-believers, who desire and support the worship, and who, if they are to be gained, must be gained by methods suited to their case. Sometimes they will be drawn to a new and abrupt change of life, in scenes like that of the pentecost, as if coming in from an outpost of enmity or derision; quite as often, perhaps, they will come into the truth, if at all, imperceptibly, by years of exercise, the fruit of which will display itself only in the final results wrought.

A very great change, also, is ere long to appear, as you will perceive, in the entrance of diverse opinions, thus of sects and controversies—consequently new modes of duty, cast by new relations. The simplicity of mere love, displayed, as it was, in the first scenes of the gospel, could not continue, however desirable it may seem. Men must think, as well as love, and thought must make its inroads on mere relations of feelings. Now, there must be formulas, organized combinations, weary debates, and, as love is *imperfect, strifes* and jealousies. And thus a long

process of forming and re-forming must go on, till the Christ of the head becomes as catholic as the Christ of the heart. Meantime, all must stand for the truth. There must be no countenance given to error. The happy days of Christian childhood are left far behind, and every church is set in relations of duty that are partly antagonistic. It must take a form required by its new necessities. What to do for the truth, whom to acknowledge, when to resist and when to forbear, how much consequence to attribute to opinions, over what errors to spread the mantle of charity, how to maintain a polemic attitude in the unity of the Spirit—these are the grave questions that are to occupy ministers and churches, and, in the right exercise of which, they are to justify their Christian name. And on this will depend the power of religion, quite as much as on the duties done to those who are aliens and unbelievers.

Next we pass on to a field where the new creating power of the gospel is displayed yet more distinctly. The first disciples, probably, had no thought but to swim in the strange joy they felt, as forgiven of God and filled with the love of Jesus. Of Christianity, as a fixed institution, taking the whole society of man into its bosom, and becoming the school of the race, they had probably, at first, no conception. Passing thence to the modern Christian faith, how great is the change! What a variety of means, instruments and arrangements has it created, maintaining all from age to age, by a charge, compared with which, the casual contributions to poor saints at Jerusalem were far less significant in their effects, and, perhaps, not more to be commended, as proofs of a Christian spirit!

First, a house of worship; and, in order to this, the new spiritual life must become a holder of real estate, and be acknowledged as such in the laws. To make the place *worthy of the* cause, genius and taste are to be called into *exercise,* and a new Christian art developed.

To maintain expenses and repairs, there must be officers created, and this requires an organized responsibility.

Mere forms and sacraments being insufficient, preachers of the word must be carefully trained for the service, and installed therein, to feed the intelligence of the flock, and lead them to the truth. Their official rights and duties must be ascertained, and, correspondently, the rights and duties of the flock—matters all how distant from the scene of the pentecost!

The times and forms of worship need to be settled; for, whether a liturgy is used or not, no organic action can be maintained without forms of some kind, to serve as laws of concert and rules of order.

Christian music, as a new art, must be created, and the children and youth must be trained therein, so that all may bear their part in the worship, and the worship exercise and inspire a devout feeling in all.

There must be a punctual and regular attendance; for the habit of worship is necessary, to its value, as a power over character. Hence there must be a common responsibility—all must be enlisted. There must be a church spirit, and, in order to this, a fraternal spirit in the members, verified by mutual sympathy and aid, under the common burdens of life—a kind of service, I will add, which is often far more beneficent than a community of goods would be; for this latter might be only a premium given to idleness, while the other is but a good encouragement to the ingenuous struggles of industry. There must, however, be some Christian provision for the poor, that they also may have their part in the Christian flock, and the blessings of charity descend upon it and dwell in it.

Nor is the article of dress, in a Christian assembly, too insignificant to be a subject of care. Probably no one had a thought of this in the pentecostal assembly; but we find the apostles, *not long* after, giving serious lectures to the

disciples upon their dress. Dress and manners, manners and morals, morals and piety, are all connected by an intimate or secret law. A people, therefore, who are careful to appear before God, in a well-chosen, modest, and appropriate dress—one that is neither careless nor ostentatious—one that indicates sobriety, neatness, good sense, and a desire to be approved of God more than to be seen of men—will avoid barbarous improprieties of every sort. Their manner will express reverence to God. What they express, they will be likely to feel; and if they become true disciples of Christ, as there is greater reason to hope, their manner will have a nicer propriety, and their whole demeanor will be more thoughtful, consistent, and lovely.

Sometimes it will be the duty of a Christian parish, inasmuch as its hope, for the future, is in the youth and children, to maintain a parish-school. A Sunday-school, to employ, in Christian studies and good works, the talents of the brotherhood, and exert a Christian power over children, who would otherwise receive no religious instruction, we now regard as indispensable.

You begin to see, in the inventory I have here made out, and which might be indefinitely extended, how many things Christianity must gather to itself, as it passes into the form of a settled institution. Not one of the articles I have here named ever entered the mind, probably, of the first disciples at Jerusalem. And yet, they are all necessary, and being necessary, exist, in so far, by a divine requirement. It now remains—

II. Extending the comparison thus begun between the scene of the pentecost and a modern Christian parish, to bring into view, under cover of what I have advanced, a few points where we appear to suffer impressions that are *partially* erroneous, and need correction. And here the *question is,* under what views, by what modes of conduct

and proceeding, in a modern Christian congregation, we may advance the power of religion most effectually? And—

1. Is there not some reason to think that we have derived, from the scene of the pentecost, a view of spiritual influence which it was not designed to teach, and which needs a degree of qualification? It cannot be questioned that a mind, exercised under sin, must be exercised, in some sense, now as then; for sin is the same, in its nature, as it then was, and turning from sin to God is the same exercise. Still, it remains as a first question, and one of radical importance, whether the holy Spirit, revealed in that scene, was revealed principally as a spirit of scenes, or as the indwelling quickener and sanctifier of man. It cannot be wrong, when a community is deeply, but soberly and reasonably, moved by the things of religion, to refer the fact to the same Divine Agency there exhibited. But if one professes, now, to speak with tongues, by the same Spirit, it may not be so readily believed. There is, probably, as little reason for this gift of tongues now, as there is for the re-appearance of Jesus in Gallilee or Paul in Damascus. There certainly is much in the scene of the pentecost that is only occasional—a temporary show-work, which belongs to the inaugural of the Spirit, but not to the doctrine of the Spirit. And now that the doctrine is intellectually produced and apprehended, what does it affirm? a Scene-Spirit, or something far more august and worthier of our thanksgiving, that Jehovah, the Eternal Life, is dwelling as a power of good, a light, an aid, a regenerator and sanctifier, in the bosom of the world—a Spirit from God, inhabiting the church, as a church life; the Christian house, as a house life; the individual, from infancy to the grave, as the life of Reason and Love—Christ himself present invisibly to all, breathing his own nature, and begetting his own image in their heart. This, in fact, we all believe, *but* we seem to fancy still that the Scene-

Spirit is the greater gift. Practically, if not theoretically, we hold this gift in so high estimation, that the Abiding Spirit is left in shadow. We extol the abiding grace, in words, and yet we practically assume that a Christian can be revived, or an ungodly person converted, only by the grace of a scene, or pentecostal occasion. Even the ordinary means, which God has instituted for the advancement of practical religion—such as preaching, family training, and godly living itself—we appear to suppose can have no renewing efficacy, apart from a scene of revival, and the peculiar mode of spiritual influence there exerted.

Most certain it is that we separate, just here, from the mass of the Christian world. Never, before, in any church known to us in history, has the impression prevailed that prevails in our American churches. And have we not some reason, in such a fact, to presume that our view of spiritual influence is, at least, partially mistaken? Under the prelatical forms of Christianity, the doctrine of the Spirit has been reduced to an abiding presence in sacraments, in priestly ministrations, and the regulative guidance of church opinions; which is very nearly the same thing as a complete denial of the doctrine; for it takes away that which is liveliest and dearest in the grace of the Spirit—his immediate intercourse with souls—leaving only a mediate grace that goes to exalt and deify, so to speak, the church prerogatives, enthroning, thus, a barren superstition, and distilling upon men, not as sinners, but as prisoners, rather to a narrow idolatry. We have endeavored to restore the doctrine of an immediate intercourse of grace with souls, and in so doing, we seem to have thrust ourselves into an opposite extreme, the belief in an Occasional Spirit—an Extraordinary Spirit. Therefore, when we see no extraordinary movement, when there is no revival of religion, *we say* that the Spirit is withdrawn. And though we *consciously* speak in a figure, we practically mean more

than perhaps we suppose. There is, if I am not deceived, a general impression, in our churches, which is nearly equivalent to a theoretic belief, that the Holy Spirit is not an abiding and always available grace. He is not so much a perpetual spring of motion, as an occasional power of com-motion. What minister of God's truth expects the word to be fruitful, what Christian really expects to grow, what ungodly person thinks it in order to repent of his sins, when there is no revival of religion? The very idea of true piety is clouded by the same illusion. It is a frame. It is more resembled to heat, than to a patient life of duty and faith. It is only once in a few years that Christian efforts are means to ends. How different the result, if we truly held the faith of an abiding Spirit, present to every good thought and righteous struggle, upholding and cherishing all weakness, drawing us ever to a closer and purer fellowship with God, pervading the family, filling the church, fertilizing the word, and connecting duty with fruit by an infallible law. Then every walk of life would be sanctified by a religious spirit. Piety would be constant, and every breath we draw would infuse some flavor of a heavenly character.

Believing, as I think we have reason to believe, that this is the real doctrine of the Spirit that was revealed, through the scene of the pentecost, as an occasional and extraordinary scene, I make no question that there will often be scenes now, as there always have been, of peculiar power and activity in religious impulses. As Christians are human, they will sometimes be unfaithful, and sink into a decline of piety, requiring thus to be re-animated. Besides, it is quite probable that, if there were no periodical fluctuations, or exaltations in the church, the memory of a Divine Agency in souls would die out, and the reality of the doctrine perish. I only deplore the certain loss we suffer, when we practically cease to hold any thing but exaltations; for

then also has perished all that is most genial and worthiest of God in the doctrine, and the part we retain sinks into a partial superstition, because the continuity of the doctrine is lost.

2. It is to be considered whether worship, as compared with preaching, is not to be held as a principal, or more effective means of grace. It was not so in the scene of the pentecost, for the subjects of that scene were not prepared to worship—worship, as a public Christian rite, was not yet instituted. But with us, in an established Christian parish, it is otherwise. The assembly are called, every time they meet, to exercise themselves not only in hearing, but also in acts and feelings directly related to God. The worship is before all and for all; and, if what I have said of the Spirit as an abiding grace is true, it is for all times. Nor is there any thing which, taken as a presentation of Christian truth, presents it with such vividness and power to the mind, as worship itself. This is truth *in act*. It presents the Christian soul before God, struggling up unto His bosom, in sentiments appropriate to the relation of a creature and a sinner to his almighty Father and Redeemer. Abstractions are here forgotten, all doubtful and debateable matter, such as confuses the mind, is left behind; and the truth presented is received in the molds of exercise, not in those of cogitation. It comes not as to a questioning, judging faculty, but it passes, in all who worship, directly into a feeling. They become, in their own persons, the working organs of truth. It enters directly into the spiritual chemistry of the soul, as spirit and life.

If then all who are present, the guiltiest as well as the purest, can feel that they are not here to be spectators, but to worship; that they are called to pour out their souls in the supplications, thanksgivings, and praises of the assembly, and to believe that the Abiding Spirit is here, to

enlighten their understanding, to move their sluggish heart, and assist them to exercise the believing and godly spirit, how manifest is it that the worship may be a most effective means of grace to all. In this point of view, of thus calling a whole assembly into action, it is not to be disguised that the liturgical plan has some advantage, if only it were limited to what may be called the standing offices of worship, in distinction from those which are occasional, and sufficient cautions were applied, to distinguish between saying prayers and being Christians. The Moravians gain the same results, in part, by a very abundant use of singing, as an instrument of devotion for all the assembly. However, the same result, for the most part, can be gained, under a more extempore form of worship; and would be, if it were not hindered by teachings that discourage and repel a part of the assembly. I speak of that part of the assembly who do not regard themselves as spiritual disciples. They are told, and rightly, that God will not accept the sacrifices of the wicked; also, that the prayers of the wicked are an abomination. But they are left under the impression that they must undergo a spiritual renovation of character, before they have any right to think of offering acceptable worship. And why not? How can the unbeliever pray, if his prayer is only sin? He should pray, I answer, not as an unbeliever, but as one renouncing his unbelief, and seeking a deliverance from the power of evil. If, up to this time, he has lived in sin, that is the very reason why he should pray, and why God calls him to pray. He is only not to pray as adhering to wickedness; for it is that which is an abomination to God. The true doctrine, therefore, of worship is, that all is for all. When we come before God, we come as sinners, and, as such, are to worship. The penitence, the holy desires, the thanks, the praises, are for all, and for one as truly as for another. If there be a man present who had never a serious thought

in his life, then let him have one. If he never worshipped, then let him begin to worship. Let him take up every expression of Christian feeling, and make it his own. Let the Christless come to Christ, here to begin their alphabet, and make the spirit of the godly life their spirit. There is not a hand-breadth of wall standing, any where, to keep them from God. He will come over even mountains of sin to meet them. He is here, by his Holy Spirit, to draw them unto his bosom. Holding such a view of worship, is it not clear that it may be even a more powerful instrument of grace than preaching? Growing up in it from childhood, exercised in it, as their own exercise, taught how to worship and how to discriminate true worship from that which is false, is it credible that they may not be trained to love it, as a privilege, and receive, through means of it, though perhaps imperceptibly, the true Christian spirit.

But we seem to hold that men must be converted under preaching, as in the scene of the pentecost, before they are called to worship. And this not only discourages the exercise, but it creates a false estimate of preaching. How shall they hear without a preacher? we say; holding the inference that preaching is God's chief instrument, and not observing how this language had its truth in the fact, that the apostle was speaking of persons who were yet ignorant of Christ, and that, under established Christian institutions, a wholly different case is presented. Assuming thus that all must be converted under preaching, as at the day of pentecost, we over magnify preaching. Our assemblies are gathered, not for the worship of God, but to hear preaching. Their religion often is to be critics of preaching. They bear the worship as a tax, or penance, on the way to come at the sermon. Sometimes it will be observed that the audience are pitched about, into all dull and listless postures, during the worship, and then, coming to the sermon, they will begin to stir themselves, and draw themselves

up into position, as if they were now to receive something of consequence! How could they express a worse irreverence toward God, or one more offensive to pious feeling, than to say, by signs so unequivocal, that they care more for hearing a man discourse, than they do for communion with God himself! I do not say that any such irreverence is intended, and yet there is a power of re-action in signs and postures, appropriate to irreverence, to beget unconsciously the feeling they express. And the contrary is equally true; so that if a Christian assembly are seen bowing themselves upon the worship, as the principal good of the occasion, it is natural and right to expect that they will have a correct, sober, thoughtful spirit.

Nor is the error of which I complain attributable, as many suppose, to the defect of a liturgy—certainly not as a necessary or unavoidable result. But it comes as a natural result, for the most part, of the doctrine, often formally asserted, that a large part of the audience have really nothing to do with the worship, until after they are converted, and that preaching is God's chief instrument of conversion—a doctrine which operates, first, to give the minister an exaggerated opinion of preaching, and tempts him thus to dispatch the worship with too little effort to give it interest and power; then, secondly, encourages the assembly, since many of them can do nothing better, to busy themselves as amateur hearers and critics of preaching. However, it is not to be withheld, that one of the reasons why so much is made, comparatively, of worship, in those forms of order which embrace a liturgy, is that the preaching is frequently so inefficient. When the sermon is nothing better than an apology for the want of one—a brief, pointless homily, without either unction, or argument, or fire, to kindle the mind to a glow—what is there left but to make something, if possible, out of the liturgy? And this brings me to speak—

3. Of the kind of preaching necessary to the highest religious effect, in a modern Christian congregation. For here also there seem to be erroneous impressions in many of our churches, as well as in respect to the relative importance of preaching. The preaching of Peter, on the day of pentecost, was scarcely more than a mere delivery of news. And how often is this example held up for imitation! "See how simple it was, how easy of apprehension, and then what power it had!" As if the telling over and over of old news, announcing again facts that have been known to every hearer from his childhood up, as familiarly as he knows his right hand, could have the same value and be means to ends, for producing the same effects! "See, too, it is said on every side, how immediate the results which followed!" And since the results were conversions to Christ, the inference is taken that every sermon ought to aim at the immediate conversion of the hearers, and be an appropriate instrument for a day of pentecost. Let the subjects be few, the illustrations low, the action extravagant, the roll of conversions the measure of success. As if it were the errand of Christianity to get by the need of intelligence, and beget a sanctity that has no fellowship with dignity! Such views and methods of preaching are doubtless somewhat less absurd, when there is no end in view but to serve an occasional effect; but they can have no other result, when continued in the same assembly, than to produce, first, soreness and distaste; finally, a settled disgust towards every thing sacred. A camp-meeting, or a band of pilgrims gathered, for a single week, a thousand miles from home, may well enough desire such kind of preaching as will serve the zest of the occasion. But a regular established Christian congregation, who expect to live and grow on the same spot, from age to age, must be required to gird up the loins of their mind. They must *reject the* diluted drinks, and betake themselves to meat.

An evangelist, or preaching vagrant, who goes about from place to place, to carry on conversion as a trade, may get on with a very slender furniture. A few stories, intermixed with exhortations and rhapsodies, and supported by new machinery, will suffice. But the life of a Christian congregation, it will be found, depends not on scenes and machineries, not on storms and paroxysms, but on a capacity rather to receive instruction; to be exercised in high argument, to bear with patience the discovery how little they know, and on a good healthful appetite for Christian food. To be able to burn in a fire decides nothing. They must know how to supply the fuel of devotion, out of their own exercise in God's truth. They must love a ministry of doctrine, or intellectual teaching. Neither is it doctrine, as many fancy, when they complain of a want of doctrinal preaching, to get a few stale dogmas impounded in the head, or stuck in the brain, as dead flies in ointment: all the rich treasures of thought, and high motive, and solemn contemplation, garnered up in God's word, must be brought out, seen, understood, and fall upon the soul, as manna from the skies. Like manna, too, it must be the supply of to-day only. A new shower must be gathered for to-morrow, and the mind of the people must be kept in active and progressive motion.

Such a kind of preaching will feed the intelligence of the hearers, and raise up pillars in the churches. And here is the great distinction between the preaching proper to the scene of the pentecost, and that of an established Christian congregation. It is the difference between Peter, giving news to the pilgrims, and Paul offering some things hard to be understood, to churches of organized disciples. Such preaching is required, in an established congregation, as will exert an educating power. And yet it will, in that way, be a converting power, as efficacious as any other, if only it is expected to be. When the community is more

deeply moved by spiritual things, it will, of course, vary its tone and its subjects to suit the occasion, perhaps multiply its efforts; but never as being in a hurry, lest the grace of the occasion may be capriciously withdrawn, never over-preaching, or preaching out, as if nothing were to be done by thought in the hearers, but all by the power of a commotion round them; for it is not the same thing to fall out of dignity and self-possession as to get rid of sin, neither is a fever or a whirlwind any proper instrument of sanctification. Mournful proofs have we to the contrary. Better is it to reserve a power for the ordinary, even when we are in the extraordinary. It is not wisdom to overwork the harvest, so that we have no strength left for the bread. Rather let the preacher believe in the Abiding Spirit, and count upon a kind of perpetual harvest. Let him think to gain many to Christ imperceptibly, by keeping alive the interest of God's truth, and letting it distill upon the hearers as a dew, and through them on the rising families. Whatever he gains in this way will assuredly remain; for it is not the birth of an occasion, but of quiet conviction. It partakes the nature of habit. It is the fruit of a godly training. Seldom therefore, will it fall away, or disappoint expectation.

Holding this view of preaching, it will be seen that I do not undervalue its power in a Christian assembly, when I give precedence to the rites of worship. If preaching be foolishness, it is yet the power of God. Without the advantage of earnest, intellectual preaching, it is impossible to produce an energetic, manly race of disciples. Let any American Christian visit the nations of the old world, where pageants, forms, sacraments, and liturgies have been, for long ages, the principal instruments of religion; where disciples are made through their eyes, more than through their understanding, and thought is not supposed to be any proper instrument of piety; let him there take the gauge of char-

acter, see how the masses of the people are rather enfeebled than strengthened by their religion—holding it as superstition, not as a faith—incurious, dull, without earnest purposes, or spirit equal to any high conflict in life; whom it would so often be absurd to address in the Christian exhortation, "Quit yourselves like men," since they have really quit being men—then let him turn again to New England, consider the energy, the inquisitiveness, the sharp understanding, the indomitable power, the iron principles—recollecting how these are the fruits of a religion that works only through intelligence, an over-preaching church, a bald, unliturgical worship—doing this, he must be singularly constituted not to feel some respect for Christian preaching, and possibly for Puritanism itself.

4. It is discoverable, I think, that in copying the type of religious exercise exhibited in the scenes of the pentecost, we have overlooked, to a lamentable degree, the office and power of family nurture. I have spoken already of the change of view that must probably have been suffered by the first disciples, in reference to this matter, when they returned to their homes. Hitherto they had fully conceived, we may suppose, of no effective instrument but preaching; no inlet to the church but that of adult conversion. In the same way, it happened every where, in the first planting of Christianity, that the principal effort was directed to the conversion of adults. It could not be otherwise. And hence it is, I conceive, that family nurture and infant baptism are not more frequently mentioned and more prominently set forth. God does every thing in its time, and not before. There are, however, distinct evidences of infant baptism in the Scripture—evidences quite as distinct as could be expected, and such, I think, as ought to convince, and will convince, any person who sets himself to a fair and easy interpretation of the Scripture language. But if it were otherwise—if the evidence were still more doubtful

than it is—the fact that such a practice became prevalent in the Christian church at an early period, connected with the fact that the gathering of adult converts must have been, for a considerable time, the main struggle and the engrossing care of the new faith, would at least make room for the inquiry, whether the rite, when developed, was not still a proper development of the interior principles of the faith? For when Christianity entered into human society, and became a regulative element in its constituted relations, then, and not before, could it fully unfold the real content of its principles. And a suspicion of this kind might well ripen into a settled conviction, when the analogies of the old system are brought into view, and the genius of Christianity, as a comprehensive blessing for the race, is considered. Then, too, an important signification will be found, in the very peculiar tenderness of Jesus to infant children, and the very singular language he used concerning them.

I offer these suggestions, not as advocating here the doctrine of infant baptism, for that is not my subject, but principally to show, by the reasonings applicable here, how the whole Christian church, in passing to the condition of a fixed institution, must have been drawn to attend more and more to the condition of infancy and childhood; till, finally, it became the great question, not how to secure adult conversions, but how to form the rising race to God? As the gospel became prevalent in any given neighborhood, or precinct, then also it was discovered that the church was to be henceforth perpetuated, mainly from the sons and daughters of the church. And now it was, that every Christian child was taken as a candidate for Christian discipleship, in his early years, and enrolled, as a catechumen, to be prepared unto God. The prevalent ider was, as history leaves us no room to doubt, that children may be trained up in the family and the church, by a sure, *though* imperceptible process, for the godly life. Thousands

of martyrs were thus trained, and some who confronted the terrors of martyrdom, even in their childish years.

And yet we are seen, at this remote period, to be resting our principal hopes for the gospel on adult conversions. We seem to fancy that we do not come to the real spirituality of the gospel plan, unless we go back to the first scenes of the church, and draw our impressions thence. If preaching then was the instrument, adult conversion the hope, so it should be now. Meantime, it is well if we are not completing the analogy, by not only training our children for adult conversion, but also to be crucifiers of Jesus preparatory thereto.

How great a loss we are inflicting on our churches, under these false impressions, it is scarcely possible to estimate. Our children grow up in sin, artificially averse to religion. Our families are irresponsible. Our piety itself is desiccated, as it is undomesticated. And whatever progress we make is wrought, by methods that are desultory and violent, and remote as possible from all the natural laws of character. In short, the mischiefs we suffer are too evident to be suffered longer. The day has come, when God calls us to undertake a remedy. We must so far change our plan, as to set Christian nurture in its true place. We must cease to regard adult conversions as the principal supply of the church, and see if we cannot train up our children *in* the ways of God. We must insist on a domestic piety. We must draw out the methods of treatment, teaching, and discipline most appropriate to engage the heart of childhood.

And in order to the best effect, we need also to institute some method of introducing baptized children to the church, that is distinct and peculiar to them—such a method as will place them in the condition of candidates, and such as will carry an expectation that they will come forward, at a suitable age, to assume the covenant, into which they

have been entered by their parents. The first Puritans, it is well known, did not demand of the Anglican church a discontinuance of confirmation; they only required the removal of bishop's grace, and other like superstitions, from the rite. The Lutheran and German reformed churches still retain a rite of confirmation. If, instead of the form of induction, called a *profession*, we had a form of *acknowledgment*, or *assumption*, in which the infant member acknowledges the initial membership his parents gave him, and assumes the vows of dedication for himself, in which they gave him to God, the effect would unquestionably be great. Had our New England fathers instituted something of this kind, answering to their doctrine that the child, when arriving at a suitable age, and giving proper evidences of Christian character, is to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, they would have given a practical form to their doctrine of infant membership, and made the rite of infant baptism a significant and powerful instrument of good. Had they done it, we should never have fallen into the mischievous impressions by which we are now turned aside from our duty, and by force of which the prosperity of our churches is now so deplorably hindered. A simple change of this nature, requiring no change of opinion, but required, rather, by the opinion held by our fathers, and theoretically assented to by us, (though practically lost out of place in our religious economy,) this simple change, connected with a change of view such as I have suggested in regard to Christian worship, would place the Christian child in a new world. The faith of an Abiding Spirit, too, dwelling in the house and the church, would raise an expectation of good for him, in the breast of godly parents and ministers, and encourage him in all good purposes and struggles. Under such a regimen, it would be wonderful if he came to an adult age as an unbeliever, or an *alien* from the grace of the gospel.

5. It is becoming more important continually, as regards the prosperity of religion in our modern churches, that the type of piety cultivated in them should be catholic, and as little restricted or exclusive as possible. In their internal discipline, and also in their external relations to each other, the endeavor should be to do full honor to the fact, that there is one only body of Christ, one catholic church in the world, and this composed of all who are spiritually united to the Head, and evidence that union by the fruits of godliness. This is THE CHURCH, and what we call churches, using the plural, are only to be regarded as voluntary fraternities, monitorial classes, so to speak, formed out of the one Christian body, for mutual watch, edification, and communion, and to maintain, with order and effect, the appointed means of grace. They may have different localities, names, modes of polity and worship, still they are all within the great fraternity of spiritual life, and therefore we have no duty more sacred than to acknowledge, in all suitable ways, every church and person, who bears the fruits of a believing and godly spirit.

And this, I say, is becoming more and more important to the life of spiritual religion. The time was, when men could heartily pray to God that he would sanctify the fires of purgation in which they burned the bodies of the erring. That is possible no more. Bigotry is now a more wilful sin, and the spiritual curse it brings as much more desolating and fatal to the character. For now it must challenge the disrespect or even the contempt of mankind, and, what is more, it must repel and disallow all that God is doing in the world. We may even say, therefore, that we have now come to a time, when the internal character of a church depends, to a very great degree, on the right fulfilment of its external relations to other churches. For these relations are now so opened, by the fluent state of modern society, that not to feel them and rejoice in them

is a crime that chills the Christian spirit. Our hearts must open as the world opens, and the disciples of every retired nook and village, when they meet to pray, or to speak of the love of Christ, must find the whole kingdom of Jesus in their hearts.

Nor let any one fancy that it is enough to have a spirit of brotherly love in exercise, such as that which was displayed in the scenes of the pentecost. To be with one accord in *one place* is not all we need. We must be with one accord, if possible, in all places. Many persons will fly to the praising of Christian love (meaning love to their own immediate circle) to excuse themselves in their bigotry and stiffness against all who are not in their creed or number. There is a difference between love to brethren and catholicity. Long after the scene of the pentecost, Peter himself had need of a special vision, to show him that Christianity was to be a world-religion. Indeed, the full idea of catholicity could hardly be conceived, until after the Christian intellect, going into a search after truth, had developed variant shades of opinion, controversies, sects, and repugnant organizations. For, when catholicity is developed, it is something more than love—a higher will subordinating diversities of form and thought, and moderating over terms of partial conflict, so as to bring them into a cordial and fully acknowledged brotherhood. It is not the infancy of unreflecting love. It is the manhood of love rather, its reflective age, when it has learned to moderate the eccentricities of young opinion, to be less positive than it was, before it was sobered by the wisdom of years, and as much more comprehensive, in its understanding, as it has learned to be less content with its own measure. Catholicity is partly a fruit of history. To become an earnest desire, a long and somewhat bitter experience is needed, as a preparatory. To become a fact, *it requires* a very advanced state of culture and mental

enlargement; next a wide field of history and a world of repugnant attitudes before it, as the material of action; and then it proceeds to its results, by generalizing, tracing agreements under forms of disagreement, finding coadjutors in adversaries, till finally the conviction is matured that our differences come of only half-seeing in us all, and that the seeing of us all together only contains the whole truth of God, and much less even than that. And this is catholicity. Now we are ready to acknowledge a brother in an antagonist. Now we ask, what have others that we need ourselves? Opinions sink into their proper scale of estimation, and the godly life, shining in its Christian fruits, rises proportionally higher. And, for this very reason, opinions become clearer and closer to the truth, because they are formed under a better practice and a more godly spirit. Nor will it ever be found that a truly catholic spirit undervalues truth. It only pays it higher homage, as being of a nature so vast that no man or sect can perfectly contain it. The same spirit, too, which makes us catholic, makes us modest, and modesty is the first condition of successful study in the truth. Or, if we speak of purity, what harm is like to follow, if a church, under the moderating power of a catholic spirit, deems its purity violated more by an unspiritual or bad life, than by a false opinion?—for what is surer to bring in false opinions, by system and without limit, than to hold, at the root of all, an opinion so false as to set the creed or the form before the life—thus to cast out every shade of error, and suffer patiently examples of practical misconduct? And what will God, in his justice, more surely give up to delusion, than the sanctimonious bigotry which crucifies an error and hugs a sin? The worst of all heretics is the man of a loose practice. And the same rule of purity holds, in reference to the acknowledgment of those who belong to other families and sects. The best defence of purity is never to cast out of a church, never to withhold

the acknowledgment of brotherhood, for any kind of opinion which does not destroy the confidence of character. By their fruits ye shall know them.

These things I say, not as desiring that we hold our opinions loosely, not as disrespecting the past, not as forgetting that there are essential truths. All truths are essential, only some are essential for some purposes, and some for others. Some truths are essential to character and salvation, others to the full effect and perpetuity of Christianity as an institution for the world. Holding the latter earnestly, as formulas necessary to the comfortable agreement and hearty co-operation of our own particular fraternity, we may yet accept freely, as members of the great brotherhood of life in Christ Jesus, all who produce the fruits of righteousness. And without this catholic temperament consciously cherished, we cannot meet the true conditions of Christian piety and progress, in this nineteenth century. A new age has come, the last act opens. Thoughts and duties never conceived, in the scenes of the pentecost, nor ever, till this present hour, made necessary to the Christian life itself, must come into power, and be acknowledged. We must now begin to measure ourselves, not by ourselves, but by the kingdom of our Lord. As we spread our aims, we must enlarge our hearts. Charity must encompass the whole brotherhood of the just, and bigotry—the curse of reason, as it is the blight of goodness, the latest born of the fall, the ugliest and absurdest shape that sin has gendered—must die.

I will pursue the subject no farther. My object has been, you will perceive, not to fill out a complete picture of the methods and instruments by which a modern Christian church is to grow and extend its power: it has rather been to select some points, where we seem to have drawn impressions from the scene of the pentecost, with too little caution,

or too little consideration of the difference between that scene and the working of Christian piety in a modern congregation or parish. Having done this, it remains for you to complete the picture, by adding all our accepted methods of proceeding, which do not require to be modified by the views offered.

It will be seen, in general, that I have sketched a view or type of Christian piety, which expects to be less desultory—which rests the power of religion less on occasions and less on adult conversions, more on godly living, and a method of progress that is constant, imperceptible, and resembled to a process of growth.

If it should be apprehended, by any, that such a type of piety, received in our churches, will prepare a descent towards formalism, I think they may quiet their apprehensions without difficulty, and even replace them by an assured confidence of higher spirituality, and a more earnest devotion to the godly life. It will be seen, at a glance, that the view presented contains no one of the elements that have heretofore entered into the historic examples of formalism. You are to have no priest standing between you and God, to transact your religion for you. You will have no prerogative grace, to descend upon you, or be dispensed to you, in sacraments. Baptism will not be a rite of Christian magic. The Lord's Supper will not be a substantiated Christ, offered to unbelief as the bread of life; but it will be a spiritual Christ, to be spiritually discerned. To be in the church is not to be a disciple, or to have a title, of any kind, to salvation. No formula of absolution removes your sins. To be buried as a saint will not be the comforting hope and solace of an ungodly life. Not one of the elements, by which the historic examples of formalism have been constructed, is here present. If (in what I have offered simply as a suggestion) I have given some countenance to a rite or form

partially resembled to confirmation, I have not proposed, for subjects, those who can say the Lord's prayer and the ten commandments, nor pledged to them, under the same, any grace which may be substituted for the want of a gracious spirit. I have only sought to fulfill the doctrine held by our fathers, to raise a religious expectation for childhood and youth, and call them, as soon as they come to a suitable age, and give evidence of their love to God, to acknowledge that love and assume the vows made by their parents. Meantime, the parents themselves, not allowed to repose on a sacramental grace, or to quiet themselves in any positive efforts, however urgent, to indoctrinate or persuade their children to what is good, are required to believe that nothing can discharge their duty but to make religion a domestic spirit in the house. On this, all rational hope of success depends. There is no substitute for this. And so they are held, by the most cogent of all motives, to a life of prayer, a careful and godly watch of their own spirit, a religious adjustment of their plans, and thus, to a perpetual growth of spiritual character, by direct and daily communion with God.

Still, it is not to be denied that there is danger of formalism under this, as under every type of piety. Nor can we ever be too fully awake to this danger. History has shown us that even Quakerism may sink into a dead formality. And so must every type of religion, when it loses the element of spiritual life. The very evil that I am now seeking to remedy, is precisely this: a want of the godly habit, and of that deep spiritual exercise, which only can suffice to carry on a work of thorough sanctification in the Christian body. We are, at this very moment, as deep in the spirit of formalism as we can be, without receiving it theoretically, as a religion. Revivals themselves have sunk into a formality, and, what is even more singular, conversions *also*. Precisely this is what every intelligent minister

feels, though he may not name what he deplores, in this manner. What is it but another kind of formalism, to look upon a revival of religion as the only hopeful instrument of good, the only supposable state of godly living? Nor is it any thing different if conversions are accepted as equivalent to Christian character, and the technical evidences of conversion, as the title-deed of salvation. A very slight perusal of our present type of religion will show how little efficacy it has, or can have, to exercise a soul deeply in spiritual things, or to produce a thorough sanctification of character. It will be seen that our religion revolves, practically speaking, about two single points: First, every man is to be converted; secondly, he is to concern himself about the conversion of others. Or, if this be not a literal and complete truth, you will see what I mean by the statement. The Christian mind is thus withdrawn, to a mournful extent, from all bosom struggles, and a careful chastening of the spirit, before God. We are not so much responsible to be godly as to be useful! We do not question so much how we may subdue sin within ourselves, as how we may enlarge the roll of converts! We seldom tremble before God, under the gloomy terrors that rise up in our faithless hearts. When we pray, it is not so much that we may come unto God, for His own sake, as that we may use a profitable expedient! Prayer is a convenience to the execution of our designs upon others. Then, if we decline from God, and sink into a worldly spirit, as we are like to do, when there is no public harvest-time of conversion to encourage us, or make our piety a means to this end, it will be observed that all remonstrances and reproofs are taken in a sense that robs them of their power. The wrong is admitted and deplored; but deplored, you will discover, on account of the loss that is suffered by the unconverted! And then, if new purposes of return to God are formed, the

Christian minister will be mortified and saddened by the discovery that the real motive for so doing is found in what may be the result to the public!—the conversions that may follow, the scenes of public effect that will gladden the heart—not in what is due to God himself, and the restoration of the unfaithful soul to his love and communion.

The shallowness of such a style of piety is too evident, and facts answer, with deplorable exactness, to what our analysis of causes discovers. We make the faith of God of none effect. At certain points we have a glimmer, if I should not rather say a blaze, of spirituality; but we have no spiritual habit. The grace of the spirit is exhausted by our religious occasions; and, between these, we sink into ourselves, to wait until the gale returns. Now and then, we have a disciple, who, against all the power of social causes round him, adheres to God, and proves his faithfulness, as a soldier, fighting on by himself. But apart from such examples, our piety consists in a series of re-conversions, or salient starts out of lethargy and dreams. There is no Christian continuity, no spiritual habit, no strong warfare, that shakes the soul in a conflict of years, and finally crowns it as a spiritual victor and hero.

In proposing, therefore, a different type of piety, I do it in the confidence that nothing else can reclaim us from the formalism which has so deplorably unspiritualized our churches. We can never have any depth in our piety—it can never do more than to ruffle, occasionally, the surface of our experience—until we unite other thoughts. I ask not for a discontinuance of revivals. I only disallow the crude and undigested opinion of revivals, under which they have sunk into a formality, and become discouragements even to a life of godliness. I insist on the truth of an Abiding Spirit, as being somewhat more than a theoretic entity—such a grace, that the church may live and grow,

in the divine life, at all times. God knows how to dispense His gifts, and He will lead us on through every scene necessary to our growth; and what he gives us, it is ours to receive, not to prescribe.

Holding this fundamental truth, I then provide scope for it in the practical life. I call you hither, one and all, without exception, to worship. I lay it upon every one to become an earnest disciple of the truth; to receive it in the Spirit, and by the Spirit apply it to his life. I enjoin it upon all, who will be saved, to live godly in Christ Jesus, and seek for immortality by patient continuance in well-doing. They are to make their whole life a refining process, under God, as the refining of silver: to purify themselves, even as Christ is pure. Every family is to be a temple of the Spirit, and Christian piety a domestic element. Having great works on hand for the evangelization of the world, our children are to be brought up in the missionary spirit, which is the spirit of Christ himself; to have their earliest love identified with the love of Christ, and the blessing of the world for his sake. Our piety we are to measure, not by our occasional frames or our accepted formulas, but by our fruits. We are to deny ourselves; we are to live by faith; we are to make our business a part of our religion, and the right conduct of it a Christian attainment. No false conservatism, bowing to ancient practice, is to sanctify a wrong, or excuse a hurtful pleasure; for we are to live, not by any human fashion, but following after Christ, in whom we hope: we are to be merciful, as he was merciful; pure, as he was pure; and have it for our meat and drink to do the will of God.

Such is the practical aim which the view I now offer you is designed to realize. It lays a foundation for better Christian attainments and a higher form of godliness. In this confidence, I offer it to your consideration, being per-

fectly assured that, if such a view were accepted, you would find every fruit of righteousness multiplied among you, and rejoice in the perpetual evidence that the smile of God is upon you, as a people. The barren years, and even barren conversions, that we now deplore, will afflict us no more. Religion—piety to God—will sweeten all the years, and hours, and scenes of life. Our children will be found traveling with us heavenward by our side. We shall grow in character; the church will multiply in numbers; cheerfulness will crown our worship; a sense of Christian progress will fortify our good purposes; and the fruits of love, scattered along our path, will be acknowledged, as proofs that God is ever with us.

THE END.

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